

FISHING FOR DINNER

from Wisconsin waters to your plate



THE WISCONSIN FISHING REPORT

Spring 2017

An annual publication of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management program

fishingwisconsin.org



An assessment buffet



Wisconsin is a great place to fish. It's evident in the big fish stories, the photographs and the memories anglers share with us every year. It's why we work to make your fishing better.

All signs point to fantastic fishing in 2017:

- Our spring and fall fisheries surveys suggest that anglers in 2017 will have "reel" opportunities for great fishing
- Many walleye stocked as part of the *Wisconsin Walleye Initiative* should be testing your angling skills and filling your frying pan this year.

Sit back, read up, and then hit the water to enjoy great fishing and the memories of a lifetime. And while you're at it, save some time to take someone fishing who's never been before, or hasn't been in a long time. The memories will last a lifetime for you and them, and you can feel good that you'll be investing in the future of Wisconsin's fishing.

Hope to see you on the water!

Justin Hg
Director,
Bureau of Fisheries Management

From Wisconsin waters to your plate

Wisconsin is into its third year of coaxing a new cadre of anglers to the water's edge by way of the groaning board. The goal is to increase the rate of consistent license buyers, necessary to maintain financial and philosophical support for fisheries management work and healthy aquatic habitats.

Starting small, the *Fishing for Dinner Initiative*, has conducted seven community education-style classes for 103 new anglers, or those with limited experience. Now it's time to go big!

We are building on our successes and applying lessons learned from those first classes by hosting a train-the-trainer workshop June 20-22 at the Kemp Field Station near Minocqua. (Planning is underway at press time, so dates may shift a day or two.) The Wisconsin Wild Harvest workshop, as we're calling it, will be a "combo platter," highlighting the bounty of our lakes, streams, woods and fields, and providing mentors with resources to lead their own classes.

We are also establishing a grant program and application process with a list of criteria required to implement these classes. Grant recipients will have training to ensure that scope, content, duration and evaluation of their classes meet acceptable standards.

All of this is part of the DNRs Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) effort, whereby we enlist experienced outdoorspeople, local chefs, culinary arts instructors, and members of the sustainable and local foods community to encourage young adults to fish or hunt. We're looping back around to

catch those people who missed the fishing boat as a kid or are new to Wisconsin and our fishing or hunting culture.

Outreach efforts include exhibiting at venues that attract a diverse mix of people who don't typically attend traditional sport shows. Look for us at Canoeopia, a paddlesport expo; the Wisconsin Local Foods Network Summit and the Midwest Energy Fair.

Watch for continuing developments of our R3 plans on our website and consider how you might be a part of them. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/Fishing-forDinner/index.html>. - Theresa Stabo, Fisheries Outreach Coordinator. (Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov, 608-266-2272 for more information).



Fisheries Outreach Coordinator Theresa Stabo demonstrates planked trout at an outreach event. Photo submitted.

2017 SEASON DATES

Early Inland Trout
January 7 (5 a.m.) to May 5

General Hook and Line Inland
May 6 to March 4, 2018

General Inland Trout
May 6 (5 a.m.) to Oct. 15

Largemouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
May 6 to March 4, 2018

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Catch-and-Release
May 6 to June 16

Smallmouth Bass
Northern Zone Harvest
June 17 to March 4, 2018

Large and Smallmouth Bass
Southern Zone
May 6 to March 4, 2018

Musky – Northern Zone
May 27 to Nov. 30

Musky – Southern Zone
May 6 to Dec. 31

Northern Pike
May 6 to March 4, 2018

Walleye
May 6 to March 4, 2018

Lake Sturgeon (hook and line)
Sept. 2 to Sept. 30

Free Fishing Weekend
June 3 - 4, 2017 summer
January 20 - 21, 2018 winter



<http://www.pinterest.com/wdnr/>

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Find links to fishing licenses, season dates, regulations, where to fish and more at: fishingwisconsin.org



Find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/WIDNR](https://www.facebook.com/WIDNR))
Watch us on YouTube ([youtube.com/user/WIDNRTV](https://www.youtube.com/user/WIDNRTV))



SIGN UP for Fisheries Updates. Go to fishingwisconsin.org to sign up and stay informed on fisheries issues.



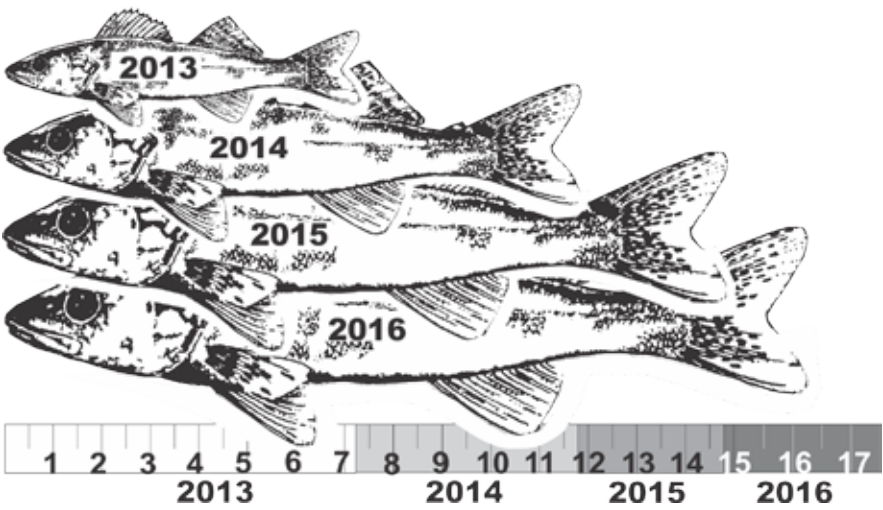
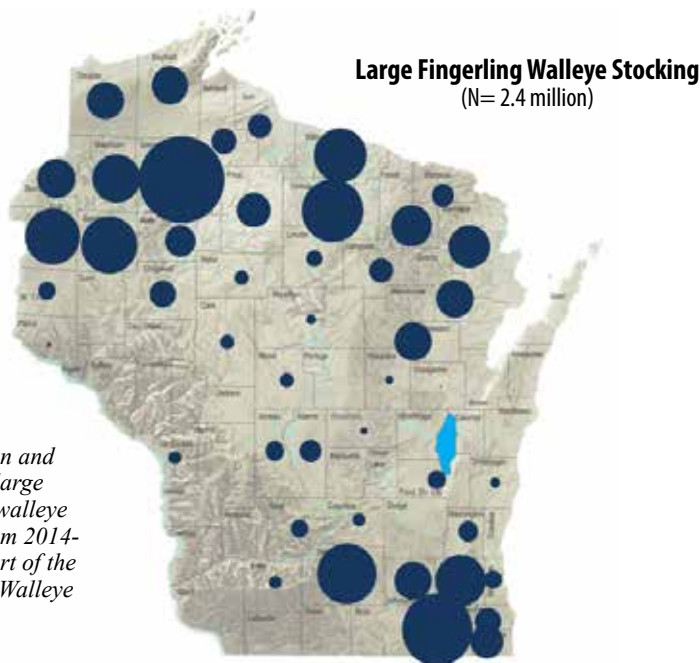
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Bringing more walleye to Wisconsin's waters

The Wisconsin Walleye Initiative will be entering its fifth year. Will anglers feel the results at the end of their line in 2017?

The Wisconsin Walleye Initiative was implemented in 2013 to bring more walleye to the state's waters and, consequently, more fish to anglers' plates. The heart of the plan was to significantly increase stocking of the larger walleye that research shows can survive better, often at rates up to 30 times that of their smaller brethren. Many fish stocked as part of the initiative should be available for angler harvest. Will you find out in 2017?



Walleye growth and development as it relates to the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative. Large fingerling walleye are generally stocked around 7 inches. The initial stocking occurred in 2013. Anglers fishing in 2017 should be picking up fish from the initiative's first few years of stocking.

More state fish records set in 2016

Anglers continued their record-setting ways in 2016:

HOOK and LINE RECORDS

Travis Strasburg from Minocqua set a new mottled sculpin record on March 15 with a 0.64 ounce, 4.5-inch fish from Gunlock Lake in Vilas County.

Nick Vander Hyden from Combined Locks reeled in a 9 lbs. 15-oz., 25-inch quillback carpsucker from the Wolf River in Waupaca County on May 1.

Sean Helling, River Falls, set an initial record for a slimy sculpin with a 0.8-ounce, 4.75-inch fish caught May 21 from the Kinnickinnic River in St. Croix County.

Cody Krueger, Shawano, established a new record for the rare Pinook salmon (cross between a Chinook salmon and Pink salmon) with a 9 lbs. 1.6-ounce, 27.9-inch fish caught the end of July from the waters of Lake Michigan in Door County.

James Nadolski from Milwaukee set the hook on another hybrid with a 1 lb. 11.3-ounce, 17.25-inch tiger trout (cross between a brook trout and brown trout) from the West Branch of the Kickapoo River in Vernon County in September.

ALTERNATE METHODS RECORDS

Noah Boissonneault of Arkdale used a bow and arrow to take a 12 lbs. 4.8-ounce, 26-inch quillback carpsucker from the Petenwell Flowage, Adams County in March.

Lawrence Kirschbaum, Lancaster, drew back in early May on an 18 lbs., 52-inch longnose gar from the Mississippi River in Grant County.

Jeremy Simmons of Gotham used his bow to shoot a 32 lbs. 12.8-ounce,

42.5-inch grass carp in May from the Wisconsin River in Grant County.

Chuck Nelson, Elkhorn, let an arrow fly in May at a 5 lbs. 3-ounce, 22-inch white sucker from Lake Nagawicka in Waukesha County.

Shawn Schmidt of Denmark, went underwater to take a 1 lb. 4.6-ounce, 14-inch yellow bullhead with a spear-gun in May from Lake Ellen in Sheboygan County. He then followed that up in June with a 6.6-ounce, 9.25-inch black bullhead from Nelligan Lake in Marinette County and a 1 lb. 5-ounce, 11.5-inch bluegill from Long Lake in Burnett County with the same spear-gun.

Noah Renner, New Lisbon, set the initial bighead carp record when he arrowed a 27 lbs. 8-ounce, 40-inch fish from the Mississippi River in Buffalo County in June.

Rounding out the 2016 list is Jaedon Botker from Shiocton who used a bow and arrow on a 11 lbs. 5.6-ounce, 31.5-inch bowfin in September from the Wolf River in Outagamie County.

THINK YOU'VE GOT A RECORD?

If you think you or someone else has caught a fish that may be a state record, here's what you need to do:

- Don't clean or, if at all possible, freeze the fish.
- Keep the fish cool, preferably on ice.
- Get the fish weighed as soon as possible on a certified scale (usually found in grocery and hardware stores, etc.) and witnessed by an observer. Contact the nearest DNR Service Center to get the fish species positively identified and to find out whether the fish is actually a state record. If possible, take a photo of yourself with the fish.



Safe-eating guidelines -
for most of Wisconsin's inland (non-great lakes) waters

<p>Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:</p> <p>1 meal per week - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p>and</p> <p>1 meal per month - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species.</p> <p>Do not eat - Muskies.</p>	<p>Women beyond their childbearing years and men may eat:</p> <p>Unrestricted* - Bluegill, crappies, yellow perch, sunfish, bullheads and inland trout;</p> <p>1 meal per week - Walleye, pike, bass, catfish and all other species;</p> <p>and</p> <p>1 meal per month - Muskies.</p>
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Exceptions to the safe-eating guidelines apply to 145 waterbodies including the Great Lakes, larger rivers, and some inland lakes where fish have been found to have higher concentrations of contaminants. For more information go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/consumption

Science in the spotlight

Can fewer mouths to feed mean better walleye fishing?

Walleye are a major target for many state anglers. They support a valuable sport fishery that brings a substantial amount of dollars to many Wisconsin businesses. Unfortunately, walleye are declining in many lakes throughout their range (and that includes many lakes in Wisconsin). Management strategies to improve walleye populations have included stocking and regulations. Biologists and researchers are proposing another experimental technique to improve walleye populations - full-scale removal of bass and sunfish species.

An untested idea is that sunfish, rock bass, and juvenile black bass are eating young-of-year walleye at levels that are affecting the numbers of young fish that enter the fishery. If this is true, then walleye populations could be improved by reducing the numbers of sunfish, rock bass, or juvenile black bass in a lake.

Researchers will be testing the idea by removing as many bass and sunfish as possible from an experimental lake, with the goal of increasing the number of surviving walleye and improving walleye fishing in the lake in the long term.

The project is scheduled to begin in Spring 2017 and conclude Summer 2021.

For more information on the project, contact:
Steve.Carpenter@wisc.edu

Fabulous Fisheries Projects

Prairie River Improvments

The Prairie River has been negatively impacted by old methods of logging and farming, and beaver activity; making the stream wide and shallow. Silt deposits throughout this reach of stream have created less than ideal spawning and feeding areas for trout and other fishes. In the 1930's or 50's, wing dams were installed to increase flows in certain sections. These wing dams were failing and allowing the river to braid out, further decreasing flows. We reinforced these wing dams to keep water flowing in the main channel of the river, along with adding more pools and runs. We call this type of project "Dig and Pile", which means we simply dig pools and runs, and deposit the dug substrate into point bars, below the ordinary high water mark, to narrow the stream and increase flow. Resting, feeding, and spawning areas were significantly improved by adding pools, runs, boulders, and woody structures. Woody habitat (20 full trees) and boulders (500) were added in the areas of stream that were deepened to increase overhead cover for trout. Wisconsin River Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited donated \$4,000 towards the cost of the boulders. About one mile of river was completed in 2015-2016. - Benjamin Rolling, fisheries technician, Antigo



A repaired wing dam and placed rock to improve trout habitat by providing overhead cover, resting and feeding areas in the Prairie River, 2016. Photo: Ben Rolling.

Sand Creek Trout Habitat Improvement Project

Sand Creek starts near New Auburn in Chippewa County and flows for 7.5 miles until it empties into the Red Cedar River in the town of Sand Creek. Sand Creek contains some of the best size structure for inland brown trout in the state with fish as big as 24" routinely caught in fisheries surveys. In the summer of 2016, a habitat improvement project was conducted on an 800-foot section of Sand Creek. The banks were stabilized and the stream was narrowed to increase the depth and help move sediment downstream. Root wads, boulder retards and jetted covers were installed to provide cover for trout. New easements have been purchased in 2016 and habitat work is planned on that area in 2017 to further improve the potential of this already phenomenal fishery. Regulations – From 10th Street downstream – 18" minimum length limit – daily bag limit of one. From 10th Street upstream – no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of one fish. - Joseph Gerbyshak, fisheries biologist, Eau Claire

Fish Sticks Come to the Lower Fox River

The lower Fox River flows for 39 miles from Lake Winnebago to Green Bay and has 17 locks, creating a dynamic river and pool system with unique fishery opportunities. Flowing through the heart of the Fox Cities, the lower Fox River is located in close proximity to over 367,516 people. DNR fisheries staff teamed up with the Fox River Environmental Education Alliance (FREEA) to incorporate a "fish sticks" project along their riverfront property in Appleton. The site is open for fishing and even has a public fishing pier. The addition of fallen trees on the riverbank will provide woody habitat for various fish and wildlife species, while also providing better public shoreline fishing opportunities for anglers of all ages. The project will also increase

educational awareness for habitat projects on the river and be used for education purposes for years to come. - Adam Nickel, Fisheries biologist, Oshkosh



Above: One of three completed fish stick complexes Below: Upstream from fishing pier after construction. Photo: Adam Nickel

Trout Anglers Welcome!

Between Lincoln and Langlade counties the Antigo Fish Team manages over 800 miles of classified trout streams. Since 1978, the Antigo Fish Team has improved 27.16 miles of stream that has been degraded due to natural and/or human disturbances. One of the largest problems we currently face is having enough time, money, and personnel to maintain our existing project sites in the best condition possible for both fish and anglers. With the help of Trout Unlimited (TU) funding, our team has had the opportunity to maintain these project sites with brushing. Over the last five summers TU has funded a two person brush crew stationed at the Antigo Service Center. This "Crew", along with other Antigo Fish Technicians and TU sponsored work days, has brushed all of the previously improved habitat locations. In addition, 2.17 miles of stream has been brushed, and subsequently brush bundled for fishing access and for fish habitat improvement. - Benjamin Rolling, fisheries technician, Antigo



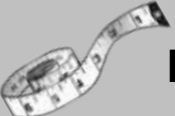
Prairie River above R and H Road before brushing (top) and the same stretch of river after brushing (bottom). Photo: Ben Rolling.



Fisheries technician Josh Krall installs a coarse woody habitat structure in Bluff Creek in summer of 2016. A Bluff Creek brown trout is measured (inset).

Bluff Creek Remeander






Bluff Creek in Walworth County was ditched for agriculture in the 1940s. In 2016, DNR staff and volunteers from Trout Unlimited and UW-Whitewater began a large-scale restoration effort upstream of Highway P, including excavation of the original stream channel, bank stabilization and native seeding, and installation of in-stream woody habitat structures. To date, over 900' of the original Bluff Creek channel has been restored, with another 1,500' planned for this winter. Recent monitoring surveys in Bluff Creek have produced up to 1,500 trout/mile and fish up to 18.4". The project will restore the natural flow regime and enhance overhead cover and trout habitat in Bluff Creek, building on the premier fishing opportunity produced by other projects immediately upstream and downstream. - Luke Roffler, fisheries biologist, Eagle



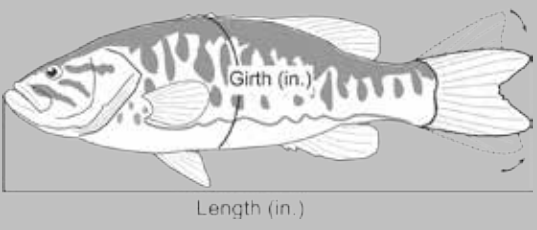
How much does my fish weigh?

Don't have a scale? No problem.
Reach for a tape measure and find the answer.

Use these equations to find the weight of your fish:

-  bass = (length x length x girth) / 1,200
-  pike = (length x length x length) / 3,500
-  sunfish = (length x length x length) / 1,200
-  trout = (length x girth x girth) / 800
-  walleye = (length x length x length) / 2,700

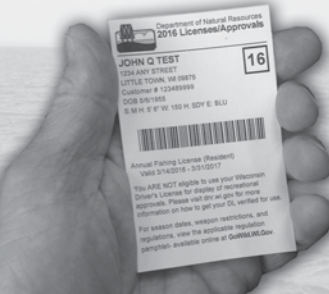
For example, you catch a 16" trout with an 8" girth. Using the equation for trout above:
 $(16 \times 8 \times 8) / 800 = 1.25$ pounds. Your trout would weigh about 1 and a quarter pounds.



Note: Results are rough estimates only. Actual weights vary slightly by waterbody.

BRING THE PAPER!

(when fishing the BIG waters)



REMEMBER...

You must carry a paper copy of your license and stamps while fishing on the waters of Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and the WI/MI, WI/MN and WI/IA boundary waters.

Fish On...Wisconsin

So much water. So much time? Take advantage of it in 2017!

Interested in a water? Want more information? Contact the local fisheries biologist dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/people/fisheriesbiologist.html

WALLEYE



ADAMS, JUNEAU and WOOD COUNTIES

Petenwell Lake - 23,173 acres. A fisheries survey was conducted on Petenwell Lake in the spring of 2016. Walleye ranged in length from 6" to 28.7" with an average length of 15.5". The most often observed length was 14.5". 58% of all the walleye handled were less than 15", 28% were between 15" and 19.9", and 14% were greater than 20". A stronger year class comprised of 13"-14" fish is expected to start pushing into the fishery for harvest at 15" in the fall of 2016. Anglers can expect to catch preferred (20"), memorable (25") and trophy (30") size walleye in this fishery. Continuous open season. Only walleye from 15" but less than 20" may be kept, except one fish may be over 28". Daily bag limit of 5. Petenwell Lake has ample access opportunities. Shoreline fishing opportunities exist in Nekoosa along CTH AA, at county parks, and on designated Wisconsin River Power Company lands. The Jim Freeman Memorial Park boat launch is located in Nekoosa on CTH AA. Boat launches are also available at the Adams County and Juneau County Parks. The Lure Bar and Grill has a private boat launch open to the public with a nominal fee and is a destination location for ice fishing access. Monroe Park in Adams County has a boat launch. A detailed map of all public access on the Wisconsin River Power Company's lands can be found on their website. http://www.wisconsinriverpower.com/pdf/recreation_petenwell.pdf. The walleye population in Petenwell Lake and the walleye populations for other flowages on the Wisconsin River are all sustained through natural reproduction.



Matt Anchor, fishery technician with a 29-inch walleye from a fyke netting survey on Big Dardis Lake, Price County. Photo: Evan Sniadajewski

BARRON COUNTY

Red Cedar Lake - 1,897 acres. In a 2016 fisheries survey, the density of adult (≥ 15 in) walleye was estimated to be 4.2 fish/acre, which was an increase from the most recent survey in 2010 when it was 2.5 fish/acre. Of the 2,582 walleye handled in the survey, 68.2% were between 14 to 18 inches. The Red Cedar Lake walleye fishery is managed with an 18-in minimum length limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. There are two public boat landings on Red Cedar Lake. The landing at Waldo Carlson Park is located on the west side of the lake off 29th Ave and is best option for larger boats. The Pigeon Creek landing is on the east side of lake off 28th St. Red Cedar Lake is consistently the best walleye lake in Barron County and is maintained through natural reproduction.

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Siskiwit Lake - 330 acres. In a 2016 fisheries survey, the density of adult (≥ 15 in) walleye was estimated to be 3.0 fish/acre. Of the 353 walleye handled in the survey, 20% were more than 15 inches. Siskiwit Lake walleye can be kept from 15 to 20 inches with one fish over 24 inches allowed and 3 fish daily bag limit. The public boat launch is located on the northeast corner of the lake and is owned by the township. Siskiwit Lake is one of the few lakes that has maintained consistent natural walleye reproduction and relatively higher adult walleye abundances in Bayfield and Douglas Counties.

BROWN, OCONTO, and MARINETTE COUNTIES

Fox River, Oconto River, Peshtigo River, Menominee River and Green Bay - Strong spring walleye runs are common on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo rivers providing anglers ample opportunities to catch large numbers of migrating walleye. Since access points in many of these rivers open in early March, hardy anglers brave cold temperatures to have the opportunity to catch many walleye and perhaps the "big" one. Most anglers jig or casting baits slowly for walleye in early spring. Late spring or summer anglers should try trolling near Geano Beach, off the Menominee River or along reefs on the east shore of Green Bay for the best fishing. The size of these walleye can be impressive with the largest fish over 30 inches and weighing in at over 10 pounds. The rules vary by location and anglers should check for walleye fishing rules in the Wisconsin-Michigan Boundary, Tributary Stream to Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are many good boat launches in the area. Good shore fishing opportunities exist on the Fox, Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo rivers. Check the Lake Michigan page for access information. www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lake-michigan/TributaryAccess.html. Walleye from the exceptionally large 2013 year class will be of legal size this year resulting high catch rates for 15"-18" fish. Anglers may need to sort through many smaller fish to catch larger walleye. Results from 2016 fall electroshocking young of year surveys indicate that the 2016 year class of walleye



Fisheries technician Josh Krall with a 14lb Geneva Lake walleye from a 2015 survey. Photo: Luke Roffler.

was above average on Green Bay while the 2016 year class of walleye from the Fox River was below average. Walleye young of year (YOY) catch from the Fox River and Green Bay from 1993 through 2016. Catch-per-unit-effort is the number of YOY caught per hour shocked at each location. The average catch for this period is 12 YOY per hour shocked.

CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

Lake Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. The Winnebago System walleye fishery continues to be one of the top walleye fishing destinations in the Midwest and 2017 should continue to provide some great fishing opportunities! DNR staff conducts multiple annual surveys to assess the Winnebago walleye population, including the spring electrofishing and Lake Winnebago trawling assessments. There were 3,716 male walleye and 1,248 female walleye tagged in the Wolf River during the 2016 electrofishing assessment. Although spring anglers were focused on catching fish, many were also anxiously looking ahead to what the 2016 walleye year class would be. High spring water levels on the Wolf River led to good conditions in the walleye spawning marshes, thus it was plausible that the 2016 walleye hatch could be strong. The annual Lake Winnebago trawling assessment that targets young of the year fishes later confirmed a strong walleye year class (9.9 YOY/trawl) that ranked as the 7th highest catch since 1986. As a result, there should be good walleye angling opportunities in the future with four

strong walleye year classes produced in the last 10 years, including 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2016. However, the 2016 bottom trawling survey also indicated strong hatches for forage base species, including trout perch (360 YOY/trawl) and gizzard shad (102 YOY/trawl) that each ranked as the 6th strongest year class since 1986. Therefore, anglers may need to work a bit harder to convince Winnebago walleyes to take the bait in 2017. The system is open year round for walleye and sauger. There is a combined daily bag limit of 5 fish, of which only 1 may be a sauger. There is no minimum length limit for either species. There are numerous access points around the Winnebago system. Consult a map of the system to see what access is near where you want to launch, or go to the DNR's Boat and Shore Fishing Access Website to search for access information (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>). DNR fisheries staff has tagged walleye annually on the Winnebago System since 1989. In that time span, 163,602 walleye have been tagged on the system. Good walleye management on the system relies on anglers to report any tagged fish they catch by mailing them to the Oshkosh DNR office (625 East County Road, Y Oshkosh WI 54901) or emailing them, along with the date caught, specific catch location and fish length and their address, email and phone number, to dnrwinnebagosystemtagreturns@wisconsin.gov. Anglers should be sure to check their walleye catch for tags and report them properly. Anglers that return tags receive a certificate that provides information about the tagged fish they caught.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Long Lake - 1052 acres. The walleye population on Long Lake in northern Chippewa County is rebounding according to recent fisheries survey data. A walleye population estimate was conducted this spring and it was calculated that there were 3.6 adult walleye



per acre. This is an increase from four years ago when the walleye population was estimated at 2.9 adult walleye per acre. Many nice walleye were caught in the survey including fish in excess of ten pounds. There is an 18 minimum length limit for walleye on Long Lake so anglers should expect to release more walleye than go in the live well, which will help this population grow into the future. 18" minimum length limit. The daily bag limit is 3. 4 boat landings.

■ CLARK COUNTY

Mead Lake - 320 acres. Total catch rate in 2016 was 0.4 per net lift, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 0.09/net lift and maximum size captured was 21". The last netting survey was conducted in 2013. Total catch rate was 0.1 per net lift, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 0.07 per net lift and maximum size captured was 26". 15" minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit. Mead Lake has two boat landings (north and south sides) and a fishing pier located near the dam on the west end of the lake. Mead Lake is stocked on an alternate-year basis with large (6 – 7") walleye fingerlings.

■ CRAWFORD and VERNON COUNTIES

Mississippi River Pool 9-10 - Over a two-day period in October 2016, DNR electrofishing crews collected two hundred and ninety-five walleye by electrofishing at night in the near-shore areas and around wingdams below Lock and Dam 8. In our sample, adult walleye were between 10 to 27 inches with the largest measuring 27.3 inches. Catch-per-unit-effort was about one hundred eighty-three adult walleye per hour. Our fall young-of-year (YOY) survey results in Pool 10 showed poor reproduction during the spring of 2016 with a catch rate of 22 YOY walleye per hour which is the second lowest year for walleye reproduction since 2002. However, YOY walleye reproduction in 2015 was exceptional at 166 YOY walleye per hour which will help maintain the fishery for year years to come. The Mississippi River is open year round for walleye. The daily bag limit is 6 fish with a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. The waters of Pool 9 are part of the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states and covers just over 240,000 acres which extends 261 river miles from the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois.

■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

St. Louis River and Estuary - 12,000 acres. Nearly 250 walleye were captured and released during a spring 2015 survey, and most ranged from 18-27 inches. The average length of all walleye was 23 inches, although female walleye were generally larger than male walleye. Season: May 13 through March 1; 15-inch minimum length; daily limit is two fish. Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. Collaboratively managed as harvest and

trophy fisheries with Minnesota DNR. From 1989 through 1993, Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR stocked over 450,000 fingerling walleye. Minnesota DNR stocked fry annually until 2006. Nearly 6,300 walleye were tagged in Spring 2015, and some of those were subsequently caught over 70 miles east along Lake Superior's south shore, the Apostle Islands, and Chequamegon Bay in Ashland.

■ FOREST COUNTY

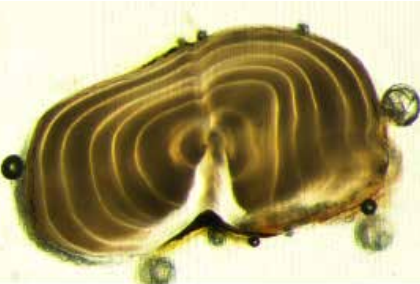
Butternut Lake - 1,292 acres, **Lake Metonga** - 2,157 acres and **Lily Lake** - 211 acres. These three lakes are considered the "best" walleye waters in Forest County. The latest population estimates for adult walleye in these waters are 1.9/acre (Butternut), 2.9/acre (Metonga), and 6.1/acre (Lily). Size structure of walleye is moderate-to-good in all three of these lakes with approximately 75% (Butternut), 85% (Metonga), and 30% (Lily) of the walleyes being above the 15-inch minimum length limit for these waters. If you are coming to Forest County and like to catch walleye, these 3 lakes are a good place to start fishing. Statewide 15-inch minimum length limit, 3 fish daily bag limit. There are relatively "easy to find" boat landings on all three of these lakes

■ GREEN LAKE COUNTY

Little Green Lake - 466 Acres, 28' deep. This "productive" body of water supports a walleye fishery supported by stocking. Recent estimates put the population at around 2 adults per acre. 87% of adult walleye handled in a 2013 survey were over the 15" length limit with mean length of 20". This is an extremely popular ice fishery. Three public and one private landing provide adequate access.

■ IOWA COUNTY

Cox Hollow Lake - 81.49 acres. Walleye are very abundant in Cox Hollow Lake. In April of 2016 there were 355 walleye sampled ranging from 11.3 to 27.3 inches with an average length of 14.9 inches. Only 6% of the walleye sampled were greater than 18 inches and 34% greater than 15 inches. The population is estimated at 11 adult walleye per acre. Anglers can expect high catch rates with few at harvestable size. Minimum



Cross section of a dorsal spine from a 23 inch Cox Hollow Lake walleye. Hard structures such as dorsal spines can be used to determine the age of walleye. This walleye was determined to be 7 years old. Photo by Caitlin Collies

length limit of 18 inches with a daily bag limit of 3. There is an improved boat launch with carry in access available as well. Cox Hollow is an electric motor only lake. A fishing pad for disabled anglers is located at the boat launch. Shore fishing opportunities are available. Cox Hollow Lake is located in Governor Dodge State Park. Camping, hiking, horse trails, swimming beach, pet area and picnic areas are all available. There is also a boat and canoe rental located lakeside.



Paul Piszczek, DNR fisheries biologist in Superior, holds a 20+ inch walleye from the St. Louis River, Douglas County. Photo: Minnesota DNR.

■ JACKSON COUNTY

Lee Lake - 37 acres. Total catch rate in 2016 was 0.3 per net lift, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 0.1/net lift and maximum length captured was 23". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 0.4 per net lift, catch rate of 15"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift and maximum length captured was 29". 15" minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit. Lee Lake has a boat landing at the southeast end and shore fishing at the beach on the northwest end of the lake. Lee Lake is stocked on an alternate-year basis with large (6 – 7") walleye fingerlings.

■ JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River - 10,000 lake acres plus 27+ river miles. Fall 2016 sampling yielded 20 young-of-the-year (YOY) walleye per mile, compared to 6/mile in 2015, 8/mile in 2014, and the record high of 104 per mile in 2013. The large year-class of 2013 is currently providing excellent walleye fishing opportunities and should continue to do so into 2017. Seasons are open year-round on the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. 15-inch minimum length, 5 fish daily bag on walleye. Royce Dalman County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam. Through the assistance of local cooperative groups, the DNR's Bark River Hatchery stocked 559,135 northern pike fry into Lake Koshkonong/Rock River in 2016.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

Enterprise Lake – 505 acres with a good naturally reproducing population; In 2015, the adult population estimate was 2.6 per acre with the majority of fish in the 11-18" range; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily limit but only 1 over 24"; Good boat landing with ample parking on the southwest side of the lake; Enterprise Creek flows north out of the lake and is part of the Pelican River drainage which joins the Wisconsin River in the city of Rhinelander

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

Lake Mohawksin – 1,910 acre impoundment on the Wisconsin River in the city of Tomahawk; Excellent naturally reproducing walleye population that was estimated at 4.7 adults per acre in 2009; 15" minimum length limit, 20-24" protected slot, 3 daily limit but only 1 over 24"; There are several good boat landings in the city of Tomahawk; The name of this waterbody is derived from the last syllable of the 3 major river tributaries that feed the impoundment: the Somo River from the west, the Tomahawk River from the north, and the Wisconsin River from the east

■ MARQUETTE and GREEN LAKE COUNTIES

Upper Fox River including Lake Puckaway. - This flowage on the Fox River is just upstream of the Princeton Dam and in most years produces good year classes of walleye. The Lake Puckaway Protection and Rehabilitation District operates a portable hatchery that surveys have shown helps to supplement the population, particularly in years with poor recruitment. A 2013 survey showed 86% of adults were above 15" and mean size was 17.5". Best fishing occurs in the spring although resident fish can be caught in the river and lake at most times of the year. Adequate access sites are located around the lake. Two developed boat launches are located in the town of Mecan on the north shore and there are three good access points on the south shore in the town of Marquette.

■ OCONTO COUNTY

Maiden Lake - 232 acres. A total of 671 walleye was collected; Seventy-four walleye were collected during the spring 2014 survey, 112 during the 2015 survey and 473 (including recaptures) during the 2015 fyke netting survey. Walleye ranged from 10.4 to 21.8 in. and averaged 16.7 in. The population estimate for walleye 12 inches and larger was 792 or approximately 2.9 walleye/acre. Walleye were reaching legal size (18 in) by age 6. 18-inch minimum length / 3 fish per day. One public boat landing is available to anglers however, parking is extremely limited. An-



Fisheries biologist John Kubisiak with a 28.7 inch walleye from Big Carr Lake, Oneida County Photographer Steve Timler.

other private boat landing is operated at the Maiden Lake Resort. In 2015, the minimum length limit for walleye was increased to 18 inches and the daily bag limit is 3 regardless of tribal harvest declarations. The walleye fishery has been maintained through natural reproduction until 2013.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Pelican Lake – 3,585 acres. A spring survey found good numbers of walleye from 11 to 20 inches, with peak abundance at 14 inches. **Squaw Lake** - 785 acres. Spring surveys found moderately abundant walleye centered on 11 to 14 inches. The adult walleye population was estimated at 2.3 per acre. Regulation: no minimum length limit, but only 1 walleye may be over 14 inches. Town-owned ramp off West Squaw Lake Road. **Sweeney Lake** - 119 acres. We estimated an adult walleye population of 1.3 per acre. Most fish were between 18 and 25 inches. Sweeney Lake Road ends at a DNR boat ramp. **Willow Flowage** - 6,306 acres. Willow Flowage has a reputation as a good walleye fishery. Two nights of electrofishing found a good catch of 15-22-inch fish, with many smaller walleye on their way up.

PORTAGE COUNTY

Stevens Point Flowage - 2,093 acres. The Stevens Point Flowage was surveyed for walleye in 2015 using fyke nets and electrofishing as part of a comprehensive survey. A total of 1,260 walleye were captured during the survey; the average length for males was 14.5 inches and 20.1 inches for females. Thirty percent of the catch was in the harvestable length slot (15-19.9 inches) and 15% were over 20 inches. Growth of both males and females is average, with males reaching maturity at age 3 and females age 4, on average. Fall recruitment electrofishing runs conducted in 2015 and 2016 showed an abundance of 35 and 46 age-0 walleye per mile, showing that 2 solid year classes of walleyes were hatched and entering the system. In general the population remains strong. The number of slot size fish continues to increase from previous surveys and strong year classes continue to contribute new recruits and provide great harvesting opportunities. Year-round season, harvest slot 15"-19.9", fish 20" to 28" may not be kept and only one fish over 28" is allowed, bag limit is 5 fish total. Angler access to the Wisconsin River is excellent with multiple access points for every segment. Maps are available through DNR online boating access site.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Delavan Lake - 1,906 acres. Recent surveys have shown the positive results of the 18" minimum length limit on walleye, with a 15.3" average length and maximum of 24". Multiple boat launches and a large town park for shorefish-

ing make Delavan an attractive destination for walleye and many other species. Current regulation: 18" minimum length limit, 3 daily bag. A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at State Highway 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shore-fishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the State Highway 50 boat launch.

WASHBURN and DOUGLAS COUNTIES

Minong Flowage - 1,564 acres. Minong Flowage walleye ranged from 11.7 to 27.2 inches. The average length was 14.9 inches. The walleye population is high density (~6.0 fish/acre) and above the Ceded Territory average for lakes with natural reproduction (~4.0 fish/acre). Minong is a high action walleye lake, but fish can be tricky to find, so trying multiple spots may be necessary to be successful. Walleye of any length may be kept, but only one fish over 14 inches; daily bag limit of 3 fish. There are three public boat launches located on the Minong Flowage. From North to South: immediately adjacent to Smith Bridge on Smith Bridge Rd, DNR landing off Flowage Rd., and Tota Dr. off CTH-I (Totagatic Park). The adult walleye population in the Minong Flowage is actually sampled in the Totagatic River. Walleye migrate upstream each spring to spawn, where DNR staff uses electrofishing to assess the population.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Nemahbin lakes - 514 surface acres. Average length – 17 inches. Population estimate – 2.2 adults per acre. Current regulation: 15 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 5. The public boat launch is located in between Upper and Lower Nemahbin Lakes off of Delafield Road. A recent fyke netting survey performed in spring of 2016 revealed quality size structure and average abundance of walleye in the Nemahbin Lakes.



Arthur Watkinson pictured with a 26" walleye captured during fyke netting on Nemahbin Lakes in 2016. WDNR photo.

MUSKELLUNGE



ADAMS, JUNEAU and WOOD COUNTIES

Petenwell Lake - 23,173 acres. A fisheries survey was conducted on Petenwell Lake in the spring of 2016. Muskellunge ranged from 13" to 49" with an average length of 37". For fish that were at least 30", 64% were larger than 38", 29% were larger than 42" and 12% were larger than 45". Size structure of the muskellunge population in Petenwell has improved since the 2011 survey. Petenwell Lake is classified as a Class A1 muskellunge water. Class A1 waters are premiere muskellunge waters and are designated as "trophy waters" based on the lake's ability to consistently produce a number of large muskellunge, but overall abundance may be relatively low. Angling action can be inconsistent at times, but when the conditions are right anglers can expect good action. Current regulation: 45" minimum length limit daily bag limit of 1. Petenwell Lake has ample access opportunities. Shoreline fishing opportunities exist in Nekoosa along CTH AA, at county parks, and on designated Wisconsin River Power Company lands. The Jim Freeman Memorial Park boat launch is located in Nekoosa on CTH AA. Boat launches are also available at the Adams County and Juneau County Parks. The Lure Bar and Grill has a private boat launch open to the public with a nominal fee and is a destination location for ice fishing access. Monroe Park in Adams County has a boat launch. A detailed map of all public access on the Wisconsin River Power Company's lands can be found on their website. http://www.wisconsinriverpower.com/pdf/recreation_petenwell.pdf. The Department is proposing to change the fishing regulation for muskellunge in Petenwell Lake and other waters on the Wisconsin River to a 50" minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1 in an effort to streamline trophy management. Did you know that it takes a muskellunge on average 17 years to grow to 50"? Attend the annual DNR Spring Hearing & Wisconsin Conservation Congress County Meeting held statewide on April 10, 2017 to give us your feedback on this proposed regulation change.

ASHLAND COUNTY

Potter Lake - At only 29 acres, it doesn't take long to do a lap around Potter Lake. A 2016 electrofishing survey sampled muskies at an extremely high rate of 12.8/ mile, so anglers traveling here can expect some action. However, while anglers can experience some fast-action, they should expect to see fish top out around 30". Nonetheless, Potter provides a unique musky angling experience, tucked away in the Chequamegon National Forest. There is an unimproved boat launch located just off of Highway GG.

BARRON COUNTY

Red Cedar River - Red Cedar River from CTH W to the Barron-Dunn County line (~19.5 river miles). The Red Cedar River has a respectable muskellunge fishery that is often overlooked by anglers. Of the 31 muskellunge handled in a recent electrofishing survey, 58% were 34 inches or larger. The largest muskellunge handled was 45.8 inches. The Red Cedar

River muskellunge population is managed with the statewide 40-inch minimum length limit and one fish daily bag limit. Barron County has several well-marked and maintained river accesses. These would include the accesses at County Highways W, OO, D, I, and AI. Anglers will likely have the best luck targeting any deeper pool habitats. Your best bet would be to float a canoe, kayak, or small jon boat and fish the pools. The Red Cedar River is stocked with muskellunge at a low level, gets muskellunge from upstream sources, and a low level of natural reproduction also occurs.

BAYFIELD COUNTY

Pike Chain - 713 acres. The Pike Chain of Lakes south of Iron River, WI offers a quality musky fishing opportunity. Of the 28 muskellunge handled in the 2016 netting survey, 32% were 40 inches or larger. The largest muskellunge handled was 51.0 inches. The Pike chain muskellunge population is managed with the statewide 40 inch minimum length limit and one fish daily bag limit. The Pike Chain of Lakes can be accessed from Twin Bear Park which is owned by Bayfield County and is located off of Hwy H. The Pike Chain of Lakes consists of seven smaller lakes with varied habitats.



Chad Leanna, Fishery technician, with a 45-inch muskellunge from a fyke net survey on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, Iron County. Photo: Jason Folstad

BROWN, DOOR, OCONTO and MARINETTE COUNTIES

Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries and bays and the Fox River - Annual assessments to determine the status of the Green Bay muskellunge population have been conducted on the Fox River using fyke nets and fall electrofishing for many years. Fyke nets set in the Fox River this past May were filled with many large musky with the largest being just over 40 pounds in weight. Many other captured fish were in the 20 to 30-pound range. Anglers also see large musky, regularly catching fish greater than 50" on local waters. Current regulation: The regulation for musky on the Fox River, Green Bay tributaries and the Wisconsin waters of Green Bay is one fish with a 54-inch minimum length. Access information: Most musky anglers launch their boat from the Fox Point Landing or the Metro Ramp on the Fox River, the Suamico Boat Launch on the Suamico River, Carmody Ramp on Little Sturgeon Bay, or the Menominee River Ramp. With 4,411 fingerling and 4,323 yearling musky stocked into the Fox River and Green Bay in 2016, and good numbers of musky stocked in 2015, the future of musky fishing on the bay is bright. Stocked fingerlings were produced from eggs collected from the Fox River and raised at the Besadny Anad-

romous Facility. Yearlings were the result of a cooperative project between Wisconsin DNR and Michigan DNR. Michigan spawned musky from Lake St Clair and transferred small fingerlings to Wild Rose Hatchery after disease testing was complete. These fish were raised at Wild Rose until they reached an average size of nearly 14". Survival of this size musky is very high which should be noticed by anglers in 5 to 7 years.

■ **CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES**

The Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles. Great Lakes spotted strain muskellunge were stocked throughout the Winnebago System during the years 2002-2007. During this time span, 613,248 fish were stocked (589,643 fry; 1,162 small fingerlings; 22,397 large fingerlings; 40 yearlings; and 6 adults). Angling pressure targeting muskies has increased in recent years and some anglers reported catching some trophy-sized fish in 2016 (>50"). Experimental fyke netting on Lake Butte des Morts (2015) and the upper Fox River (2016) yielded six fish ranging from 41.3-50.7 inches. In an effort to help bolster the population, 1,046 yearling Great Lakes spotted muskellunge have been stocked in the system since 2015. All fish stocked received right ventral fin clips to indicate that the fish was stocked. Anglers who catch a muskellunge on the Winnebago System can help with management efforts by checking their fish for fin clips and reporting it to the Oshkosh DNR office. The 2017 open season for muskellunge is May 6, 2017 – December 31, 2017 with a daily bag limit

of 1 fish and a minimum length limit of 50". There are numerous access points around the Winnebago system. A number of them require a daily or seasonal launch fee. Consult a system map or the DNR's Boat Access Website to search for launch information near where you want to fish (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>). With the help of local fishing and conservation clubs 15 acoustic tags were purchased and surgically implanted in yearling muskellunge in 2016. There are currently 29 acoustic receivers located throughout the Winnebago System that are programmed to pick up the signal from acoustic tagged fish that swim by the receiver. Because each tag has a unique signal, individual fish can be tracked as they move by receivers. Conducting this acoustic tag study will allow for muskellunge movement to be evaluated. The battery life of these tags is 5 years and will hopefully encompass 1-2 years of adult spawning runs which would provide data about spawning habitat use.

■ **CLARK COUNTY**

Mead Lake - 320 acres. Total catch rate in 2016 was 0.7 per net lift, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.04/net lift and maximum size captured was 45". The last netting survey was conducted in 2013. Total catch rate was 1.4 per net lift, catch rate of 40"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift and maximum size captured was 48". Regulation: 40 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 1 fish. Access Information: Mead Lake has two boat landings (north and south sides) and a fishing pier located near the dam on the west end of the lake.

■ **DOUGLAS COUNTY**

St. Louis River and Estuary - 12,000 acres. Approximately 200 fish captured and released in most recent fyke net survey had an average length of 40 inches. 12%

of all fish in the survey exceeded 45 inches. Muskellunge were well distributed throughout the upper and lower river segments. Current regulation: Open May 27 through November 30; 50-inch minimum length with a daily limit of one fish. Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. Collaboratively managed as a trophy fishery with Minnesota DNR. Wisconsin DNR stocked Wisconsin strain muskellunge from 1983 to 2004 (43,171 total of two sizes of fingerlings) and Minnesota DNR stocked two strains (Shoepack and Leech Lake) from 1985 to 2005 (45,525 fingerlings and 4,231 yearlings. Minnesota DNR also stocked 7,533 tiger muskies from 1988 through 1990; these have not been captured in recent surveys and likely exist only in low numbers, if at all. The Spirit Lake area is popular for muskellunge angling. During the next few years, hydroacoustic tags will be placed in adult muskellunge to determine non-spawning habitat use throughout the river and Lake Superior.

■ **FOREST COUNTY**

Lily Lake - 211 acres and **Roberts Lake** - 415 acres. Many people don't think of Forest County when they think of musky fishing in Northern Wisconsin. Forest County may not have the number of musky waters as nearby Oneida and Vilas Counties, but some of the Forest County waters are just as good, if not better! During 2016 we assessed the musky populations in 3 Forest County musky lakes, and 2 of these lakes were pretty impressive. Lily Lake and Roberts Lake. While both of these lakes are considered low density populations, the size structure of both of these populations is very good. During 2016 we found that 20% (Lily) and 23% (Roberts) of the muskies captured in these lakes were > 44 inches, and 10% (Lily) and 6.7% (Roberts) were > 48 inches. Numbers like that should put these waters on the radar of serious musky angler. State-wide 40-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish daily bag limit Boat access to Lily is off of Lily Lake Rd, and boat access to Roberts is off of MacArthur Trail.

■ **GREEN LAKE COUNTY**

Little Green Lake - 466 acres. Little Green is one of the few lakes in this part of the state to provide a musky fishery. It is a stocked fishery and receives an annual quota of fall fingerlings and also gets supplemental stocking by local lake groups. Angler caught fish typically average around 38", but fish upwards of 50" have been caught in recent years. There are three public access points around the lake and one private landing located at Todd's Landing.

Big Green Lake - 7,346 acres. Big Green Lake is managed as a low density "trophy" fishery. Numbers are on the low side, but more anglers are beginning to target them and report seeing more fish. Green Lake's extreme depth and forage base give fish the capability to grow big and live long. We have seen fish approaching the 50" mark. Green may be a little challenging to fish, but there is that chance to land a "trophy". There are a number of boat landings, around the lake, providing good access. Some of these require a fee. Big and Little Green both fall under the standard statewide regulation for musky; opening on the first Saturday in May and ending on December 31st. The minimum length limit is 40" with a daily bag limit of one.

■ **IOWA COUNTY**

Twin Valley Lake - 136 acres. The musky population in Twin Valley Lake is a high density, medium-sized fishery. Population estimates have shown 1.5 musky per acre. A fall 2016 electrofishing survey found 20 yearling and adult musky ranging from 17 to 40.9 inches, with an average length of 30 inches. Sixty percent of the musky found in the fall surveys were greater than 30 inches. 40-inch minimum, daily bag limit of 1. There is one public access boat landing. A Park sticker is required to enter Governor Dodge State park. Electric motors only. Shore fishing is available. Located in Governor Dodge State Park. Camping, hiking, horse trails, and picnic areas are available. In 2016, 151 large fingerling musky were stocked into Twin Valley.



Caitlin Collier of Madison with a November musky she caught and released on Twin Valley Lake, Iowa County. Photo by Bradd Sims.

■ **IRON COUNTY**

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - At over 13,500 acres, there is no shortage of water to search for the elusive musky. A fyke-netting survey from spring of 2016 sampled muskies at a rate of 0.5/net-night, ranging in length from 10" – 49.5". Muskies are currently in low-moderate densities, but are well-worth the effort as there are many quality-sized fish available to anglers. There is good access from 6 different public boat launches as well as many other private resort access points.

■ **LANGLADE COUNTY**

Greater Bass Lake – 258 acres; Stocked at 0.5 fish per acre in alternate years; Netting surveys in 2009-10 estimated an adult population density of 0.13 per acre with an average length of 35.5"; The largest captured was a 44.7" female; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily; 2 boat landings off of Mill Road; Most locals refer to this lake as simply Bass Lake.

■ **LINCOLN COUNTY**

Jersey City Flowage – 404 acres of naturally reproducing muskellunge water on this hydropower impoundment on the Tomahawk River; Netting surveys in 2014-15 revealed a potential "sleeper"



Jonathan Pyatskowit, DNR Fisheries Biologist, holding a large muskellunge sampled during spring fyke net survey in Shawano Lake, Shawano County.



Jordan Meddaugh, Fisheries Technician, with a muskellunge on Petenwell Lake, Adams, Juneau and Wood Counties. Photo: Jennifer Bergman

destination for muskellunge; The adult population is low density but high quality with fish up to 48"; 40" minimum length limit, 1 daily; Good boat landing with ample parking on the east shore and excellent shore fishing opportunities at the dams on both ends of the flowage; Stocked muskellunge from the Willow Reservoir could be moving downstream and contributing to the Jersey City Flowage population.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Caldron Falls Reservoir (1,018 acres) and **High Falls Reservoir** (1,498 acres) - The musky fisheries are maintained through a combination of stocking and natural reproduction. The density (fish / acre) of musky is higher in Caldron Falls than in High Falls but fish in the upper 40-inch range are present in both flowages. Current Regulation: 40 inch minimum length / 1 fish per day Access information: There are 5 boat landings on Caldron Falls and 6 on High Falls. Shore fishing opportunities are excellent. These flowages are very scenic because most of the shoreline lies within the Peshtigo River State Forest and is undeveloped. Stocking has primarily taken place in Caldron Falls but beginning in 2017 or 2018, High Falls will be stocked with 0.5 large fingerlings / acre or approximately 750 fish every other year.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Sweeney Lake - 119 acres. During spring netting, we captured 9 juvenile and 45 adult muskellunge representing most sizes from 30 to nearly 49 inches.

PRICE COUNTY

Deer Lake (145 acres), **Big Dardis Lake** (144 acres), **Musser Flowage** (563 acres), and the **Phillips Chain of Lakes: Duroy Lake** (379 acres), **Elk Lake** (88 acres), **Long Lake** (418 acres), and **Wilson Lake** (351 acres). In the last few years fyke netting, electrofishing, and angling in several relatively small lakes located within a few miles of Phillips have all produced muskellunge approaching the prized and elusive trophy-size benchmark of 50 inches. Fyke nets in Deer Lake captured a spawning pair 42 and 46 inches in early spring 2016. Thirteen muskies were captured by electrofishing in fall 2014-2016 in nearby Big Dardis Lake—the largest were 43.4 and 47.3 inches. Just down the road, netting and electrofishing catches in Musser Flowage included six muskies 43-48 inches in recent surveys. In 2016 two 48-inch muskellunge were caught and released by angling and electrofishing in the Phillips Chain of Lakes, which lies within and around the city of Phillips. These memorable fish likely descended or grew from the large fingerlings stocked at one- or two-year intervals since the 1970s. Regular stocking combined with some natural reproduction maintains low adult population abundance in these waters. Harvest follows the standard regulation in

the Northern Zone, but we believe most musky anglers release their catch.

SAWYER COUNTY

Blaisdell Lakes is 341 acres and lies along the East Fork of the Chippewa River. The lake is home to a dense population of native muskellunge. Blaisdell would be classified as an action lake, with higher than normal catch rates for anglers but only moderate size. Muskellunge between 30-40 inches are common, though musky over 40 are often caught as well. The Blaisdell musky population benefits from having access to a diverse forage base that includes suckers and several species of redhorse. Muskellunge on Blaisdell Lake are managed with a 40 inch minimum length limit. The boat landing on Blaisdell Lake was recently renovated.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Pewaukee Lake - 2,437 surface acres. Average Length - 34 inches, population estimate - 0.62 adults per acre. Current regulation: 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. Access information: There are two boat launches found on Pewaukee Lake; the county park launch on the west side and Smokey's Muskie Shop on the east side. Pewaukee Lake is home to the largest musky density in southeastern Wisconsin. Not only do the muskies in Pewaukee boast an average size of 34 inches, anglers annually catch a few fish over 50 inches. Abundant yellow perch, black crappie and bluegills make up an excellent forage base for this thriving musky population.



BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River - Pool 5A. 2016 fall electrofishing surveys showed good largemouth bass numbers above and below the 14-inch length limit. Overall, nearly 91 adult and juvenile largemouth bass were captured per hour. Forty percent of surveyed largemouth bass were greater than the 14-inch length limit, while nearly one in five were greater than 16 inches. Surveyed fish topped out just shy of 19 inches. 14-inch minimum length; 5 in total with smallmouth bass. Check the DNR website for access locations. Pool 5A spans 9.7 miles between Lock and Dam 5A near Winona, MN and Lock and Dam 5 near Minneapolis, MN. Merrick State Park is located on Pool 5A north of Fountain City. Check the DNR website for park information.

BURNETT COUNTY

Lipsett Lake - 393 acres. Adult largemouth bass ranged from 8.0 to 19.5 inches. The average length was 12.9 inches. In 2016, there were an estimated 5 fish/acre and 22% were over 14 inches. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. There is one public boat launch at Lipsett Lake. It is located at the end of Lipsett Access Rd. on the SE side of the lake. Lipsett Lake receives a fair amount of fishing pressure for largemouth bass. A 2010 creel survey revealed that largemouth bass were the second most pur-

sued and third most harvested fish in Lipsett Lake.

CLARK COUNTY

Mead Lake - 320 acres. Total catch rate was 13 per mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 6/mile and maximum size captured was 20". Of the total catch, 44% of bass were 14"+. In 2012, total catch rate was 23.7/mile, catch rate of 14"+ fish was 3.7/mile and maximum size captured was 20". Of the total catch, 16% of bass were 14"+. 14 inch minimum length limit/5



Evan Sniadajewski, Fishery technician with a 21-inch largemouth bass from electrofishing survey on Chelsea Lake, Taylor County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

fish daily bag limit. Mead Lake has two boat landings (north and south sides) and a fishing pier located near the dam on the west end of the lake.

CRAWFORD and VERNON COUNTIES

Mississippi River Pool 9 - The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources surveyed backwater lakes in October and November 2016 in Pool 9 near Ferryville, WI and Lansing, IA to determine the health of the fishery. Unusually high water conditions during our sampling efforts may have reduced our catch rates with catch-per unit effort for largemouth bass at 25 fish per hour that ranged 4.1 to 17.3 inches in length. The average size for largemouth bass was 10.0 inches with 35% of the sample being larger than 14.0 inches. Larger bass in the 3 to 5-pound range are not uncommon and each year a handful of 6-pound-plus fish are caught by tournament anglers. Continuous open season, 14" minimum length with a 5-fish daily bag limit. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. The waters of Pool 10 are part of the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is located in four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois along the Mississippi River and was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America. The refuge covers just over 240,000 acres and extends 261 river miles from north to south at the confluence of the Chippewa River in Wisconsin to near Rock Island, Illinois and has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) and a Globally Important Bird Area.

DODGE COUNTY

Fox Lake - 2,625 acres. Largemouth bass catch rate for 2016 fall electrofishing was 66/hour, compared to 161/hour in 2015, 114/hour in 2014, 48/hour in 2013 and above the 10-year average of 82/hour. The large year-class of largemouth bass produced in 2015 will provide excellent future fishing opportunities. 18-inch minimum length, 1 fish daily bag on largemouth bass. Public boat launches and shorefishing sites: Clausen Park on Mill Creek outlet channel, Town Park (northwest side), shorefishing at CTH A Bridge. While not known as a musky lake, Fox Lake does boast an occasional 45+ inch musky

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

Long Lake - 423 acres. Surveys from 2016 yielded a catch rate of 27.8/mile which is about average for the region. The observed average length of 13 inches is unremarkable but the maximum length of 20 inches is outstanding. Overall, Long Lake offers excellent largemouth bass fishing opportunity. Daily bag limit 5, minimum length limit 14 inches. Public access, including a public boat launch, can be found at Long Lake Recreation Area - Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit, which encompasses the majority of the eastern shore.

FOREST COUNTY

Roberts Lake - 415 acres. Roberts Lake has a largemouth bass population that is very attractive to those anglers looking for fast-action bass fishing. Extensive surveys during 2016 estimated largemouth bass abundance at 9.1 adults/acre, which is twice the abundance of the average largemouth bass population in this area. Populations with high abundance typically have very poor size structure, but that is not necessarily the case with Roberts Lake. The Roberts Lake population is dominated by "good-sized" largemouth, with 73% of our catch being 12 to 17 inches in length. Statewide 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 fish daily bag limit A public boat-landing is located on MacArthur Trail.



Lucas Kubisiak (age 9) with a largemouth bass on Tomahawk, Oneida County. Photo: John Kubisiak.



A Washburn County largemouth bass is returned from where it came. Photo: K Scheidegger.

IRON COUNTY

Brandt, Deertail, and One Man Lakes - 11, 10, and 26 acres, respectively. These lakes are small in size and off the beaten path. Crews observed respectable numbers of largemouth in the 10” – 17” range in all of these lakes. All of these lakes provide quality angling opportunities with a picturesque backdrop.

Turtle-Flambeau Flowage - 13,500 acres. Throughout all of the 2016 spring survey work on TFF, crews handled only 47 largemouth bass. Although largemouth bass were consistently sampled in very low abundances, 84% of them were over 15” and the average size was 16.8”. While it might seem like a needle in a haystack type scenario, most of these individuals are home to the east end of the Flowage from Fisherman’s Landing to Murray’s Landing, and so the Flowage “fishes” a lot smaller than it actually appears when it comes to largemouth. Those anglers in search of a unique challenge or are looking for a lunker largemouth should try the east end of the TFF.

JACKSON COUNTY

Lee Lake - 37 acres. Total catch rate was 60 per mile, catch rate of 14”+ fish was 6/mile and maximum size captured was 17”. Of the total catch, 11% of bass were 14”+. In 2009, total catch rate was 67.1/mile, catch rate of 14”+ fish was 12.1/mile and maximum size captured was 19”. Of the total catch, 18% of bass were 14”+. 14 inch minimum length limit/5 fish daily bag limit. Lee Lake has a boat landing at the southeast end and shore fishing at the beach on the northwest end of the lake.

LANGLADE COUNTY

Rabe Lake – help us eradicate largemouth bass from this 6-acre, naturally reproducing brook trout spring pond; No length limit and daily bag of 5 fish; Harvest season opens the first Saturday in May and ends on October 15 with the trout season; Please help out the brookies and target bass for removal here! Stocked trout lakes managed for put-and-take trout: **Crooked Lake, Pence Lake, Rogers Lake, and Townline Lake**; 5 daily and no length limit; Help us make these stocked trout lakes the best they can be by targeting and removing the trout eating largemouth bass!

LINCOLN COUNTY

Stocked trout lakes managed for put-and-take trout: **Ament Lake, Henson Lake, Larson Lake, Moraine Lake, and Tahoe Lake**; 5 daily and no length limit; Help us make these stocked trout lakes the best they can be by targeting and removing the trout eating largemouth bass!

OCONTO COUNTY

White Potato Lake - 978 acres. Previous surveys showed that White Potato Lake has a decent largemouth bass population. The average length of bass collected during the last survey was 14 inches and fish up to 20 inches were collected. Since White Potato Lake is relatively shallow (average depth = 5 ft.) and there is a lot of aquatic vegetation, bass can hide and feed just about anywhere around the lake. 14-inch minimum / 5 fish per day Anglers can choose from 6 boat landings to access White Potato Lake. There is no early catch-and-release season for largemouth bass on White Potato Lake even though it is within the northern bass zone.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Pickerel Lake – 736 acres. A single round of electrofishing found good size and numbers of largemouth bass. We handled several 18-inch fish, and the largest was 20.9 inches.

POLK COUNTY

Ward Lake - 82 acres. Ward Lake has an abundant largemouth bass population with low size structure, which makes it a great option for the harvest-minded bass angler or anyone interested in fast angling action. Catch rates of largemouth bass during recent fall electrofishing surveys have consistently ranged between 50-100 fish/mile, which is considered very high. With the high abundance, the size structure and growth rates of largemouth bass are poor. There are few fish over 14 inches, but since Ward Lake has a no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit, anglers are able (and encouraged) to harvest bass less than 14 inches. Increasing the harvest of small (<14 inch) bass should improve the size structure of the population. There is one boat landing on Ward Lake and is located on

the southwest side of the lake off 80th St. Ward Lake is considered a seepage lake. Like most seepage lakes, the water level can fluctuate from year to year.

RUSK and CHIPPEWA COUNTIES

Island Chain of Lakes —**Chain Lake** (468 acres), **Clear Lake** (95 acres), **Island Lake** (526 acres), and **McCann Lake** (133 acres). Comparing electrofishing results from spring 2010 and 2016 shows that the largemouth bass population abundance has decreased and its size structure has improved in the Island Chain of Lakes since the 14-inch minimum length limit on bass was eliminated there in 2011. Across the four lakes of the Island Chain combined, our measure of largemouth bass abundance decreased by nearly half while the proportion of bass 15 inches and longer rose from 10% in 2010 to 28% in 2016. Chain Lake experienced the greatest changes. Despite their reduced abundance, largemouth bass continue to outnumber smallmouth bass by a widening gap (33:1 in 2016 versus 13:1 in 2010). To promote further improvement in the Island Chain’s bass fishing opportunities anglers are encouraged to release all smallmouth bass and selectively harvest and responsibly use 9- to 12-inch largemouth bass. We will continue to evaluate the combination of liberal bass harvest rules, restricted walleye harvest rules, and large fingerling walleye stocking as our strategy to restore declining walleye fisheries that once sustained themselves in the Island Chain and many other northern Wisconsin lakes. Anglers may keep in total five largemouth bass and smallmouth bass of any length from Chain, Clear, Island, and McCann lakes combined. Only three walleyes per day may be kept from these four lakes combined, and they must be at least 18 inches long. McCann and Clear lakes each have a public boat landing with a concrete ramp and boarding dock. Island Lake has two public landings, and Chain Lake has none.

SHAWANO COUNTY

White Clay Lake - 234 acres. Spring boomshocking surveys captured moderate numbers of largemouth bass with an average size of 15.4 inches and some bass up to 20.0 inches. Approximately 87% of the bass caught were over 14 inches. Statewide default – 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag. One boat access on east shore.

Pensaukee Lakes - 109 acres. Spring boomshocking surveys captured moderate numbers of largemouth bass with an average size of 13.5 inches and some bass up to 20.2 inches. Approximately 62% of the bass caught were over 14 inches. Statewide default – 14-inch minimum length limit and 5 daily bag. One boat landing on the western basin of the three lakes.

WALWORTH COUNTY

Lake Geneva - 5,401 acres. Recent bass surveys on Lake Geneva have produced very good catch rates and size structure, including a 14.3” average length and 21.5” maximum length. Anglers are reporting excellent fishing days, particularly in the fall. 14” minimum length limit, 5 daily bag Six public boat launches are available on Geneva: Lake Street in Fontana (west side), E Geneva Street in Williams Bay (north side), Chapin Road (north side – no parking), Wrigley Drive in Lake Geneva (northeast side), Hillside Road (southeast side) and Linn Road (south side). Shorefishing opportunities are available at several parks and municipal fishing piers across the lake.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Eagle Spring and Lulu lakes - 270 surface acres. Average length – 9 inches. No minimum length limit - largemouth bass and smallmouth bass from 14 inches to 18 inches may not be kept, and only 1 fish over 18 inches is allowed. The daily bag limit is 3. The public launch is located on the lakes’ east side off of county Highway E, near Eagle Spring Pub. This lake has an abundant population of largemouth so anglers are encouraged to harvest bass less than 14” to help reduce the abundance and improve growth rates.

SMALLMOUTH BASS



BARRON COUNTY

Red Cedar Lake - 1,897 acres. Red Cedar Lake provides anglers with one of the best smallmouth bass fisheries in the area. Of the 120 smallmouth bass greater than 8 inches collected during the 2016 spring electrofishing survey, 21.7% were also 14 inches or larger. The largest smallmouth collected was 18.5 inches. The Red Cedar Lake smallmouth bass fishery is managed with the statewide bass regulation: 14-inch minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. There are two public boat landings on Red Cedar Lake. The landing at Waldo Carlson Park is located on the west side of the lake off 29th Ave and is best option for larger boats. The Pigeon Creek landing is on the east side of lake off 28th St. Smallmouth bass do well in Red Cedar Lake due to the abundance of rock and gravel which are habitats that smallmouth prefer.

DOOR COUNTY

Green Bay waters - The smallmouth bass fishery along the Green Bay waters of Door County is well known for its outstanding abundance and robust size structure. Although the 2016 creel data are not yet available, the smallmouth bass catch per effort from angler surveys over the previous two years declined somewhat. Although still relatively high, catch rates declined in 2015 for the second year in a row and the rate of 0.64 smallmouth caught per



Fisheries biologist Lawrence Eslinger with a 19.9” smallmouth bass caught on a Vilas County lake. Photo: Steve Gilbert



Fisheries technician Josh Krall with two big Fox River smallmouth bass from a 2016 survey in Kenosha County.

hour fished fell just below the previous 15 year average of 0.69. The most recent spawning population survey conducted in the Sturgeon Bay area in 2015 suggested a modest decline in smallmouth bass catch per effort and overall size structure. However, in the few years previous to this, abundance and size were at very high levels and the current smallmouth population is still in good condition relative to other populations statewide. One bit of good news is recently rebounding Lake Michigan water levels should provide more smallmouth spawning and nursery habitat that was lost during the very water low levels recorded around 2012-2013. The rules vary by location and date, anglers should check the smallmouth fishing rules in the Tributary Streams to Green Bay and Lake Michigan and the Lake Michigan sections of the regulation pamphlet for season and harvest rules. There are many boat launches in the area including several in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay; Peninsula State Park is one of the sites that provide access to areas in northern Door County. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess> for a listing of some of the launches in the area. One of the better shore fishing sites is the George K. Pinney County Park (formerly the Olde Stone Quarry Park) that is located at the north side of the mouth of Sturgeon Bay.

■ FLORENCE COUNTY

Patten Lake - 255 acres. Smallmouth bass anglers looking for quality and trophy-sized smallmouth bass need to take a trip to Patten Lake. During 2016 the fisheries management team in Florence conducted a thorough investigation of Patten Lake, and what we found was an impressive smallmouth bass population. Data collected in 2016 estimates the population of adult smallmouth bass to be about 1.3 adults/acre, which puts this population in the low density category. However, while the density is low, and you won't catch excessively high numbers of fish on your trip, you will have a good chance of catching very large smallmouth bass. Our survey revealed that 74% of the adult population was greater than 14 inches, and 34% were greater than 17 inches. Generally speaking, these size structure values are nearly double the average for this part of the state. Patten Lake also has a low density, high quality largemouth bass population, so even though the population of each individual species is low, the combined populations of both species give it a moderate abundance of bass. Statewide 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 fish daily bag limit. A public boatland-

ing is located on North Shore Road, to get to this site just take Patten Lake Rd off of HWY 101.

■ FOREST COUNTY

Lily Lake - 211 acres. Smallmouth bass anglers looking for quality and trophy sized smallmouth bass don't need to look any further than Lily Lake. During 2016 the fisheries management team in Florence conducted a thorough investigation of Lily Lake, and what we found was quite special...the data collected in 2016 estimates the population of adult smallmouth bass to be approximately 1.9 adults/acre, which is a moderate abundance. Size structure of the population was impressive, nearly half of the adult population was > 14 inches, and a whopping 13.6% and 3.2% of the population were greater than 17 and 20 inches, respectively. The size structure of this population should put it on the short list for anyone looking for trophy smallmouth bass. Statewide 14-inch minimum length limit, 5 fish daily bag limit A public boat landing is located on Lily Lake Road.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

When targeting smallmouth bass think big water and rocky water. Smallmouth bass prefer boulder and rocky habitat and in Langlade County, the **Wolf River** has 46 miles of rocks galore. Anywhere downstream from the Post Lake dam east of Elcho all the way downstream to the Menominee County line is prime smallmouth water. Parts of the Wolf River grade to coldwater and are better suited to trout, but warmer stretches hold plenty of smallies. Most fish are in the 10-16" range, but there are smallies up to 20" present. There is a 14" minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 bass. Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May. Right below the Post Lake dam there is a county park with a fishing dock and plenty of shore fishing opportunities. This is a popular area. There is also a boat ramp to launch small boats and canoes and kayaks. Throughout the county, the Upper Wolf River Fishery Area provides ample public walk-in access to the Wolf River.

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

The **Wisconsin River** and its impoundments cut the county in half and provide

50 miles and over 5,000 acres of top-notch brown bass fishing opportunities. The Wisconsin River system throughout the county produces high density and high size quality populations. The majority of fish are in the 12-18" range, but fish over 20" are caught. There is a 14" minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 bass. Harvest season north of STH 64 starts the third Saturday in June, and south of STH 64 starts the first Saturday in May. The impoundments all have several boat ramps and between state, county, and utility company land, there are plenty of shore fishing opportunities.

■ MARINETTE COUNTY

Chalk Hills Flowage - 866 acres. Data collected in 2016 demonstrated an average length of bass collected was 15 inches and fish up to 20 inches were measured. This section of the Menominee rivers supports diverse habitat with shallow river water (less than 5 feet) above Chalk Hills. The impoundment has a maximum depth of 30 ft and 80% of the impoundment is greater than 3 ft. There are scattered areas of rock and aquatic vegetation providing good habitat just about anywhere around the river/lake. 14-inch minimum / 5 fish per day Access information: Anglers can choose from 4 boat landings from Pemene Falls to Chalk Hills dam. Anglers have continuous access to 13 miles of the Menominee River from Pemene Falls to Chalk Hills dam.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Big Carr Lake - 213 acres. A spring netting and electrofishing survey found abundant smallmouth bass less than 13 inches and lower numbers of larger fish up to 19.1 inches. A DNR boat ramp is located along Hwy D. **George Lake** - 435 acres. An electrofishing survey found good numbers of smallmouth of all sizes, including 2 fish over 19 inches. A DNR boat ramp is located on the east side of the lake at the end of Nostalgia Lane.

■ WASHBURN COUNTY

Trego Flowage - 383 acres. Trego flowage smallmouth bass collected in fall 2016 ranged from 5.5 to 19.5 inches. The average length was 14.4 inches. 64% of smallmouth bass sampled were over 14 inches. 14-inch minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. There is one public boat launch at Lipsett Lake. It is



A 19-inch smallmouth bass from Long Lake, Washburn County is brought to the boat. Photo: K Scheidegger.

located at the end of Lipsett Access Rd. on the SE side of the lake. This sample represents a fall fishery present in the Trego Flowage. Large adult smallmouth bass migrate from the Namekagon River downstream to overwinter in the flowage. This fall opportunity gives anglers a chance to fish for smallmouth bass when they are more concentrated than other seasons of the year.

NORTHERN PIKE



■ ASHLAND COUNTY

Lake Galilee - 213 acres. Recent survey efforts sampled northern pike at a rate of 11.3/net-night, ranging in total length from 14" - 38.4". Pike are currently present in moderate densities, and are available in a variety of sizes. Anglers are encouraged to harvest pike to assist in maintaining stability in the fish community. Currently, there is no minimum length limit and a total daily bag limit of 5 northern pike for Lake Galilee, Ashland County.

■ BARRON COUNTY

Upper Turtle Lake - 438 acres. Upper Turtle Lake is a good lake for anglers interested in northern pike with decent size structure. Most of the northern pike captured in recent surveys were between 20-30 inches, with fish exceeding 30 inches fairly common. Northern pike in Upper Turtle Lake are managed with the statewide regulation-no minimum length limit and five fish daily bag limit. There is one boat landing and fishing pier on the south end of the lake which is located off Highway 8. In addition to northern pike Upper Turtle Lake is a good lake for most other species. The lake has a no minimum length limit for largemouth bass and anglers are encouraged to harvest small (<14 inch) largemouth bass.

■ CALUMET, FOND DU LAC, GREEN LAKE, OUTAGAMIE, SHAWANO, WAUSHARA, WAUPACA, and WINNEBAGO COUNTIES

The Winnebago System includes the four lakes (Lakes Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan) along with all their tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first dam including the upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. - 165,246 acres for the lakes and roughly 142 river miles In the spring of 2016 DNR fisheries crews set fyke nets on Lake Butte des Morts to assess the northern pike population. There were 434 northern pike captured and 29% of fish handled were larger than the 26" minimum length limit. The presence of quality sized northern pike was also observed with 78 fish surpassing 32 inches. Good opportunities exist throughout the system particularly for quality-trophy sized fish; however, northern pike fishing on the system can be challenging due to an abundant amount of natural forage, including gizzard shad. The 2016 Lake Winnebago trawling survey indicated a strong gizzard shad hatch on the system (102 YOY/trawl, ranking 6th highest since 1986). Therefore, anglers may need to get a little creative and log some extra time to hook into northern pike on the system. There is a daily bag limit of 2 and a minimum length limit of 26". There are numerous accesses around the Winnebago system. Consult





Fisheries technician, Andrew Notbohm, displays a 40-inch Lake Winnebago northern pike taken from a net sample in 2016. Photo: Ryan Koenigs.

a system map or the DNR’s Boat Access Website to search for launch information near where you want to fish (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess>).

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Minong Flowage - 1,564 acres. Northern pike collected in spring 2016 ranged from 10.5 to 39.0 inches. Thirty-five percent of fish collected were over 21 inches and 17% of fish collected were over 30 inches. The average size was 19.8 inches. Current Regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 5 fish. There are three public boat launches located on the Minong Flowage. From North to South: immediately adjacent to Smith Bridge on Smith Bridge Rd, DNR landing off Flowage Rd., and Tota Dr. off CTH-I (Totagatic Park). Northern pike are one of the first fish to spawn in the spring after ice-out. Spawning activity can begin when water temperatures are a chilly 39° F.

FLORENCE COUNTY

Lake Ellwood - 132 acres. There are very few places anglers can go in northern Wisconsin with a decent chance to catch a northern pike over 40 inches, but Lake Ellwood is anything but normal. The Lake Ellwood northern pike population is of very low abundance, approximately 0.35 adults/acre. The very low abundance allows for extremely fast growth rates and incredibly high size structure. Extensive surveys of the pike popula-



Matt Anchor, fishery technician holds a 39-inch northern pike from electrofishing survey on Phillips Chain, Price County. Photo: Jeff Scheirer.

tion in recent years shows an average of 7.6% of the pike population is over 40 inches! While you won’t catch high numbers of pike from this lake it is very likely your best chance of catching a 40+ inch fish! Since the lake is only 132 acres with a maximum depth of 19 feet it may not be as hard as one might think to locate one of these large fish. 40-inch minimum length limit, 1 fish daily bag limit. A public boat landing is located on West Lake Ellwood Road.

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

Long Lake - 423 acres. Surveys from 2016 yielded a population estimate of 1.4 adult fish per acre which is a relatively low density. The observed average length was 20 inches and the maximum length was 33 inches. Under the current regulations Long Lake offers an excellent northern pike harvest opportunity. Five northern pike of any length may be kept Public access, including a public boat launch, can be found at Long Lake Recreation Area – Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit, which encompasses the majority of the eastern shore.

GREEN LAKE and MARQUETTE COUNTIES

Lake Puckaway - 5,039 acres, 5’ average depth. This flowage on the Fox River continues to be the premier northern pike fishery for this area. Over 1,300 pike were handled in our spring survey in 2012. 88% of pike were larger than 21” with mean size at 25.6” and fish up to 38.5”. There are three good access points on the south shore in the village of Marquette and two developed landings on the north shore. The north shore landings can be tricky when water levels drop during the summer months.

LANGLADE COUNTY

White Lake – 146 acres; Naturally reproducing, high density and high size quality pike population; We did a survey here in 2016 and estimated the adult population at over 5 per acre; The majority of the fish were in the 15-25” range but we saw some pike up to the mid 30” range; No length limit, 5 daily; Good boat ramp with ample parking on the

east shore and also a nice fishing dock; The factory on the southeast shore makes hardwood basketball floors for arenas all over the world

LINCOLN COUNTY

Lake Alexander – 677 acres; Naturally reproducing, high density pike population; 2011 survey estimated the adult population at over 3 per acre with the majority in the 15-25” size range; No length limit, 5 daily; Good boat ramps on the east and west shores; Lake Alexander is an impoundment on the Wisconsin River and the dam that forms it is owned by WPS and produces electricity.

MARINETTE COUNTY

Peshtigo Flowage - 232 acres. The last fisheries survey revealed an abundant pike population. Over 500 pike were collected; pike averaged 18 inches and the largest measured over 40 inches. Several fish between 25 and 30 inches were collected. No minimum length / 5 fish per day There are 2 boat landings on the flowage; one is located in the Town of Peshtigo and the other is north of Highway 64 in the Peshtigo River State Forest. Of interest: Until 2016, the northern pike fishery was managed with a 26-inch minimum length limit and a 2 fish per day bag limit.

MARINETTE, OCONTO, BROWN and DOOR COUNTIES

Green Bay and tributaries. The late, wet springs of 2013 and 2014 provided favorable conditions for northern pike spawning. In 2017, anglers can expect good numbers of age-3 and age-4 northern pike in Green Bay waters and tributaries. Most of those fish will be of a quality size in the mid to upper 20-inch range with a few fast growing females exceeding 30 inches. Because the vast size of the bay reduces competition between top predators and because it hosts an abundance of prey fish such as yellow perch, gizzard shad, and round gobies, we do not see stunted populations of pike as is commonly seen in many inland lakes. In winter, using a tip-up with a large shiner or dead smelt fished just off of the bottom in shallow water can work well. Current regulation for Green Bay and major tributaries: Open all year. Daily limit is 5. No length minimum. Current regulation for all other Green Bay tributaries: Open 1st Saturday in May to 1st Sunday in March. Daily limit is 5. No length minimum. There are numerous boat access and tributary access locations along Green Bay. In early spring, adult northern pike migrate from Green Bay in tributaries and ditches to spawn in shallow wetlands, often travelling dozens of miles. Culverts that are undersized or improperly set can prevent adult pike from accessing prime wetland habitats. Many partner agencies (federal, county, tribal) have been working to identify and replace poor culverts in streams connected to Green Bay.

ONEIDA COUNTY

Pickerel Lake – 736 acres. A single round of electrofishing turned up good numbers of northern pike up to about 26 inches. **Pelican Lake** – 3585 acres. Northern pike were abundant in our spring survey. Length was centered on 23 inches, but fish ranged in size from 9.7 to 33.5 inches. **Sweeney Lake** - 119 acres. We handled 740 northern pike during spring netting. Most fish were 11 to 22 inches, while the largest pike was just over 30 inches.

RACINE COUNTY

Eagle Lake - 515 acres. A spring netting survey in 2015 produced an incredibly high catch rate of northern pike in Eagle Lake, with a 27.1” average length and 36.1” maximum length. The lake is clearly capable of producing big fish at a 40” minimum length limit, with a very strong forage base of panfish and pike spawning habitat throughout the lake. Ice fishing action is off the charts, though the lake is very popular during hard water so get there early. Current regulation: 40” minimum length limit, 1 daily bag. A public boat launch with a large parking lot on the northeast side of the lake off Church Road at Eagle Lake County Park, another public boat launch with a large parking lot on the west side of the lake off Minnetonka Drive, and a third public boat launch on the south side of the lake off Eagle Road. The County Park provides shorefishing opportunities and other family activities. Eagle Lake currently has restrictive harvest regulations for several species following a recent chemical treatment. This allows northern pike to grow to trophy size of 40” and beyond.

SAWYER COUNTY

If you have a great recipe for pickled fish then we need you! **Lac Courte Oreilles** (5,300 acres) in Sawyer County is home to a historic fishery. However, northern pike are not necessarily a welcome part of that fishery. Pike got into LCO in the 1950s and have increased in abundance since. Today there are an estimated 5,000-8,000 adult pike in the lake, with most being concentrated in the few weedy bays around the lake. The DNR is interested in reducing pike abundance to allow for better muskellunge management. Anglers visiting LCO are likely to experience good pike fishing action, and they are encouraged to keep pike (daily bag limit of 5 still



Fisheries biologist Tammie Paoli with a 36 inch northern pike captured and released in November 2016 on the lower Menominee River during trout and whitefish surveys.

applies). Harvesting pike, especially small ones, will help restore balance to the LCO fishery and can provide some great pickled or fried fish in the process.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Big Muskego Lake - 2,200 surface acres Average Length – 22 inches with fish observed up to 38 inches. 40 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 1. There are three public launches located on the east, south and southeast sides of the lake found on Boxhorn and Durham

Drive Big Muskego is shallow lake averaging 3 feet deep and has heavy aquatic plants and big northern pike. The conservative minimum length and bag limits provide exciting catch and release opportunities for pike.

■ WAUPACA COUNTY

White Lake - 1,064 acres. Spring fyke netting surveys captured high numbers of northern pike with an average size of 15.5 inches with some up to 20.0 inches. Only 1% of the northern catch was over 21 inches in length. Statewide default – no minimum length limit and 5 daily bag. Three boat accesses on south shore. Abundant numbers of northern pike would be an excellent opportunity for great ice-fishing action with lots of “flags”. If anglers are planning family outings or looking to get children into fishing this would be a place to check out.

PANFISH



■ ADAMS COUNTY

Lake Sherwood - 216 acres. A fisheries survey was conducted on Sherwood Lake in the spring of 2016. Bluegills ranged in length from 4.4” to 8.3” with an average length of 5.8”. Over 45% of the bluegills caught were 6” or greater. Pumpkinseeds ranged in length from 4” to 7.8” with an average length of 6.1”. 72% of our catch were pumpkinseeds 6” or greater. Anglers should not expect to see many preferred size (8”) bluegills or pumpkinseeds in 2017, but perhaps down the road due to the new special regulation! Special panfish regulation – 25 daily bag limit, no more than 10 sunfish (bluegill and pumpkinseed), 10 crappies, or 10 yellow perch may be kept per day on Lake Sherwood. The special panfish regulation also is on neighboring lakes – Lake Arrowhead and Lake Camelot, Adams County. An angler’s possession limit is still 50 fish. Lake Sherwood has one public boat landing near State Highway 13. Not every bluegill is the same when it comes to taking them home to eat! If you wanted to take a ½ pound of bluegill fillets home you’d need to harvest either 25-5” fish, 14- 6” fish, 8- 7” fish, 3.5- 8” fish, and only 2- 9” fish. Really the only way to improve size structure and fishing quality for panfish is to reduce harvest. The special panfish regulation for the Tri-Lakes (Lake Sherwood, Arrowhead and Camelot) is expected to increase the average size of panfish and provide anglers a more enjoyable fishing experience! The special regulations will be evaluated in the winter of 2021.

■ ADAMS, JUNEAU and WOOD COUNTIES

Petenwell Lake - 23,173 acres. A fisheries survey was conducted on Petenwell Lake in the spring of 2016. There was a strong year class of crappie comprised of 11-12” fish that anglers should expect to see in their catch in 2017 as 12-13” or larger fish. 90% of the crappies we caught were 10” or greater and 23% were 12” or greater. Anglers have the chance to catch trophy crappie (greater 15”) in Petenwell Lake. There was also a strong year class of bluegills comprised of 8”-9” fish that anglers will enjoy, 42% of our catch was 8” or greater. That

strong year class was observed in the 2011 survey as 4-5” fish, bluegill as a rule of thumb grow 1” per year. Anglers can expect to see some nice bluegills into 2017, but abundance is relatively low especially compared to crappies. There are weaker year classes of 4-7” bluegills observed in 2016 compared to 2011, so anglers can expect the quality of their bluegill fishing experience to be not as good as those fish grow to desirable lengths for harvest. Statewide panfish regulation – 25 panfish aggregate daily bag limit. Petenwell Lake has ample access opportunities. Shoreline fishing opportunities exist in Nekoosa along CTH AA, at county parks, and on designated Wisconsin River Power Company lands. The Jim Freeman Memorial Park boat launch is located in Nekoosa on CTH AA. Boat launches are also available at the Adams County and Juneau County Parks. The Lure Bar and Grill has a private boat launch open to the public with a nominal fee and is a destination location for ice fishing access. Monroe Park in Adams County has a boat launch. A detailed map of all public access on the Wisconsin River Power Company’s lands can be found on their website. http://www.wisconsinriverpower.com/pdf/recreation_petenwell.pdf.

■ BARRON COUNTY

Hemlock Lake - 364 acres. Hemlock Lake offers excellent bluegill and black crappie opportunities. During the spring 2016 netting and shocking surveys, there were good catches of 7 to 9-inch bluegills and 8 to 12-inch crappies. Panfish in Hemlock Lake are managed with the statewide regulation- 25 fish bag limit and no minimum length limit. There is one boat landing on Hemlock Lake and it is located on the south end of the lake off 28 St. Anglers can also access Hemlock Lake through the navigable channel from Red Cedar Lake. Hemlock Lake is part of the Red Cedar Lake Chain, which also includes Red Cedar and Balsam Lakes. The three lakes vary greatly in habitat which gives anglers opportunities for many different fish species.



A bluegill over 9 inches is not uncommon from Lake Winnebago. Photo: Ryan Koenigs.



Chad Leanna, fishery technician with two large black crappies from a fyke net survey on a Price County Lake. Photo: Skip Sommerfeldt.

■ BAYFIELD COUNTY

Middle Eau Claire Lake - 926 acres. Middle Eau Claire Lake offers excellent bluegill and black crappie opportunities. During the spring 2016 netting and shocking surveys, there were good catches of 7 to 9 inch bluegills and 8 to 12 inch crappies. Panfish in Middle Eau Claire Lake are managed with a regulation of 10 fish bag limit and no minimum length limit. The boat landing on Middle Eau Claire Lake can be accessed on the south end of the lake off of Hwy 27. Middle Eau Claire lake has shown increases in numbers and size structure since the 10 bag panfish regulation went into effect in 2006.

■ BUFFALO COUNTY

Mississippi River – Pool 5A. 2016 fall electrofishing surveys showed a healthy bluegill fishery. Overall, nearly 87 adult and juvenile bluegill were captured per hour. Thirty percent of surveyed bluegill were greater than six inches, while one in ten were greater than seven inches. Surveyed bluegill topped out at just over 9 inches. Daily limit 25 in total for bluegill and pumpkinseed (sunfish). Check WDNR website for access locations. Pool 5A and its floodplain encompass approximately 17,700 acres. Merrick State Park is located on Pool 5A north of Fountain City. Check the DNR website for park information.

■ CLARK COUNTY

Mead Lake - 320 acres; White crappies were captured in Mead Lake only. Black crappies: Total catch rate in 2016 was 187 per net lift, catch rate of 10”+ fish was 3.7/net lift and maximum size captured was 16.5”. The last netting survey was conducted in 2013. Total catch rate was 94 per net lift, catch rate of 10”+ fish was 2.3 per net lift and maximum size captured was 17”. Bluegills: Total catch rate in 2016 was 51 per net lift, catch rate of 8”+ fish was 1.3/net lift and maximum size captured was 8”. The last netting survey was conducted in 2013. Total

catch rate was 26 per net lift, catch rate of 8”+ fish was 1 per net lift and maximum size captured was 8.5”. White crappie: Total catch rate in 2016 was 41 per net lift, catch rate of 10”+ fish was 8.5/net lift and maximum size captured was 16.5”. The last netting survey was conducted in 2013. Total catch rate was 95.7 per net lift, catch rate of 10”+ fish was 4.1 per net lift and maximum size captured was 12.5”. No minimum length limit/25 daily aggregate bag limit for panfish. Other Information: Accessible fish facilities in our area are available at Lake Wazee, Black River Flowage, and Teal Flowage in Jackson County, Mead and Arbutus Lakes in Clark County, and Second Lake, Arctic Springs Pond and Lake Henry in Trempealeau County.

■ CRAWFORD and VERNON COUNTIES

Mississippi River Pool 9. Electrofishing surveys conducted October and November of 2016 in Pool 9 near Ferryville, WI and Lansing, IA showed good populations of bluegill 5 to 10 inches and yellow perch 7 to 15 inches. Although these species can be found throughout the backwaters of Pool 9, anglers should target areas such as Goose Carcass and Big Lake backwater complexes for some fantastic winter ice fishing opportunities. Efforts to enhance and rehabilitate backwater lakes in Pool 9 have greatly improved the fishery which makes these backwater complexes a great place to fish year-round. Continuous open season with daily bag limit of 25 bluegill, 25 yellow perch, 25 crappie, 25 bluegill, and no minimum length limits. There are many boat and shore fishing access locations along the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River in Pool 9 offers a variety of unique fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities. The river lies in a valley which is surrounded by majestic bluffs. This valley was scoured out by floodwaters that were released from melting glaciers thousands of years ago. Those floodwaters created a mosaic of habitats which are constantly changing as the river meanders downstream through the main channel and into side channels, sloughs, backwater lakes.

Navigating the river can be a little intimidating at first with the mix of habitats, varying water depths and flows, islands, wing dams, closing dams, mud flats and sand bars. However, it's worth the effort to get out and see the mighty Mississippi River.

■ **FOND DU LAC COUNTY**

Long Lake - 423 acres. Surveys from 2016 yielded a bluegill catch rate of 54.8/mile which is below average for the region. The observed average length of 5.4 inches is unremarkable but the maximum length of 9.8 inches is outstanding. Local anglers often mention Long Lake as the best area panfishing opportunity. All panfish species, 25 in total. Public access, including a public boat launch, can be found at Long Lake Recreation Area – Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit, which encompasses the majority of the eastern shore.

■ **IOWA COUNTY**

Cox Hollow Lake - 81.49 acres. Bluegills are abundant in Cox Hollow Lake. In May of 2016, 310 bluegills were sampled ranging from 3.4 to 8.8 inches with an average length of 7 inches. Fourteen percent of the bluegills sampled were above 8 inches and thirty three percent larger than 7.5 inches. Pumpkinseed, yellow perch and black crappie are present in lower abundance. Black crappie sampled from this survey had an average length of 9.4 inches. No minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 10. One boat launch is available. Cox Hollow is an electric motor only lake. A fishing pad for disabled anglers is located at the boat launch. Shore fishing opportunities are ample, with a popular spot being along the dam. Cox Hollow Lake is located in Governor Dodge State Park. Camping, hiking, horse trails, swimming beach, pet area and picnic areas are all available. There are also canoe, kayak, and boat rentals located lakeside. Twin Valley Lake is also located inside of Governor Dodge State Park.

■ **IRON COUNTY**

Sandy Beach - 111 acres. A summer fyke netting survey sampled crappies at a rate of 42.0/net-night ranging in length from 4.7" – 14.2" and averaging 7.3".



Retired fish manager Gene Van Dyck of Dodgeville with a nice perch from Cox Hollow Lake, Iowa County. Photo: Caitlin Collies

During this same survey, bluegills were sampled at a rate of 8.2/net-night and ranged in length from 3.3" – 8.1" and averaging 6.4". Sandy Beach provides anglers with a nice dual-purpose trip: crappies can provide fast-paced action while bluegills provide a higher quality harvest option.

■ **JACKSON COUNTY**

Lee Lake - 37 acres. Black crappies: Total catch rate in 2016 was 6 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.3/net lift and maximum size captured was 10.5". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 2.5 per net lift, catch rate of 10"+ fish was 0.2 per net lift and maximum size captured was 10.5". Bluegills: Total catch rate in 2016 was 13 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 1.7/net lift and maximum size captured was 9". The last netting survey was conducted in 2009. Total catch rate was 11 per net lift, catch rate of 8"+ fish was 1.6 per net lift, and maximum size captured was 9.5". No minimum length limit/25 daily aggregate bag limit for panfish. Accessible fish facilities in our area are available at Lake Wazee, Black River Flowage, and Teal Flowage in Jackson County, Mead and Arbutus Lakes in Clark County, and Second Lake, Arctic Springs Pond and Lake Henry in Trempealeau County.

■ **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

Lake Ripley - 418 acres. A 2016 spring fyke net survey documented a quality bluegill population with good size structure. Bluegill ranged from 3.1 to 9.0 inches with 33% of the bluegill sampled greater than 6 inches. Current regulation: Panfish: bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, crappie and yellow perch open all year, no minimum length, 25 fish (in total) daily bag. Public boat launch located on Island Lane off Hwy 12 on the south side of the lake. Something that the angler might find interesting: (stocking history, record fish, habitat work, etc). Lake Ripley produced the state record largemouth bass in 1940 and the record still stands.

■ **KENOSHA, RACINE, MILWAUKEE, OZAUKEE and SHEBOYGAN COUNTIES**

Lake Michigan and tributaries. In 2016 the yellow perch sport harvest was comprised of fish that were primarily 4 years old from the 2012 year class. Most fish that are sport caught are 3-5 years old, and we expect these year classes of perch to support the fishery again in 2017. In 2015 the sport harvest of yellow perch decreased some from previous years, but anglers were still able to get a few nice perch under the right conditions. The best times to target perch near-shore is a few days after west winds bring cooler water and baitfish close to shore; when the water begins to warm up after cooling seems to be the best time to target perch. Early mornings seem to be the most productive, and don't overlook a midday bite in mid to late July. Current regulation: Open from June 16 – April 30. Daily bag limit is 5 yellow perch with no minimum length. There are many boat and shore access

■ **LANGLADE COUNTY**

Panfish Study Lakes with Special Regulations: Regulations: 25 panfish per day but no more than 10 of any one species: Big Twin Lake, Dynamite Lake, Long Lake, and Mueller Lake; During May & June 15 panfish per day but no more than 5 of any one species, 25 panfish of any species the rest

of the year: Crystal Lake, Moose Lake, and White Lake; 15 panfish per day but no more than 5 of any one species: Meyer Lake

■ **LINCOLN COUNTY**

Panfish Study Lakes with Special Regulations: Regulations: 25 panfish per day but no more than 10 of any one species: Hiltz Lake and Rice Reservoir Chain (Bridge Lake, Deer Lake, Lake Nokomis, and Rice River Flowage); During May & June 15 panfish per day but no more than 5 of any one species, 25 panfish of any species the rest of the year: Hilderbrand Lake and Pesobic Lake; 15 panfish per day but no more than 5 of any one species: Crystal Lake and Echo Lake

■ **MANITOWOC, KEWAUNEE and DOOR COUNTIES**

Manitowoc and Kewaunee County lakes are all less than 140 acres, Door County 250 to 1200 acres. Inland lakes in Manitowoc County are small and easy to fish with small boats. Panfish, mainly bluegill, yellow perch and rock bass are popular with local anglers. Most lakes have abundant panfish although in some lakes they average less than 6" in length. Best bets for shore fishing include Long Lake and Gass Lake. Other lakes have good boat launches. Experienced anglers or beginners can spend an enjoyable day of fishing on these lakes.

Lakes in Kewaunee County are also small. East Alaska, West Alaska, Heide-mann, and Krohns Lakes all have public access and are great places for family fishing because they can be fished from small boats. Panfish are abundant in these lakes so the fishing action can be very good, however large panfish may be hard to find.

Door County Lakes are much larger than lakes in the other counties. Kangaroo Lake has good numbers of yellow perch, bluegill and large rock bass. Spring yellow perch fishing is very popular off of the causeway (Highway E). Clark Lake has seen increasing numbers of bluegill and rock bass. Panfish in these lakes have good size structure with good numbers of 8" panfish in them. The Forestville Flowage provides shore fishing opportunities and has good numbers of black crappie in it. Anglers may also find some nice bluegill and yellow perch.

Current regulation: Statewide rules, except for Silver Lake, Manitowoc County which has a 10 panfish bag limit and Bullhead, English, Long, Harpt and Pigeon Lakes in Manitowoc County that are part of the ongoing Statewide panfish experiment. Please check the regulation pamphlet for the current panfish bag limits and seasonal restrictions on these lakes.

■ **MARINETTE COUNTY**

Lake Noquebay - 2,398 acres. Big bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie and perch can be found in Lake Noquebay located just northeast of Crivitz. Bluegill over 8 inches and crappie over 10 inches are not uncommon. Additionally, nice-sized yellow perch and pumpkinseed can also be expected. Lake Noquebay has good weed growth in certain areas of lake and the water is moderately stained. 25 in total (bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, crappie) Lake Noquebay can be accessed from a boat ramp located on the northwest side of the lake on Boat Landing Road or from Lake Noquebay County Park.



A pair of big pumpkinseeds from Lake Beulah in Walworth County during a 2016 survey. Photo: Luke Roffler.

■ **MARQUETTE, OCONTO, DOOR and BROWN COUNTIES**

Green Bay. Yellow perch sport fishing harvest is estimated from an annual creel survey. Open water harvest of yellow perch in 2015 was 93,964 fish compared to 98,709 fish in 2014. The majority of the open water harvest (34%) was by boat anglers launching at ramps at Door and Kewaunee Counties, followed by anglers in Door and Kewaunee counties who have a privately moored boat (25%). Boat anglers launching at ramps in Brown County accounted for an estimated 13% of the overall open water harvest. The remaining 28% of harvest was by pier, shore, or stream anglers, or by anglers who responded to the moored boat survey in Oconto or Brown county. These are similar proportions to the 2011-2014 harvest, with the exception of a higher proportion of moored boat harvest from Door and Kewaunee Counties in 2015. Anglers often have good luck catching perch in harbors or river mouths in the fall months. Up to date fishing information can be found at on the DNR website, keywords 'Green Bay fishing report'. Open May 20 to March 15. Daily limit is 15 yellow perch. No minimum length. There are dozens of boat and shore access locations to fish for yellow perch on Green Bay. Diets of yellow perch can be diverse and may include zooplankton such as daphnia or the invasive spiny waterflea, invertebrates like caddisfly larvae, or other fish such as small perch, round gobies, or shiners.

■ **ONEIDA COUNTY**

George Lake – 435 acres. A single round of electrofishing found moderate to abundant crappies centered on 7.75 inches. We captured lower numbers of perch up to about 7.5 inches. A DNR boat ramp is located on the east side of the lake at the end of Nostalgia Lane. **Moen Chain (Moen, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Lakes)** - We ran nets in Moen, Fourth and Fifth lakes and found abundant black crappie centered on 7.5 inches, with good numbers up to 10 inches. There were low numbers of yellow perch from 5.5 to 9 inches. Moen Chain has an experimental daily bag limit of 25 panfish, with no more than ten of any one species from the entire chain. Access is from a Town-owned ramp off Lakeshore Drive. **Squaw Lake** (Oneida and Vilas Counties) - 785 acres.

Spring netting found a moderate density black crappie population with peak abundance at 8 inches, and good numbers of fish up to 13 inches. Perch catch was fairly low, with sizes scattered up to 10.4 inches. Squaw has an experimental daily bag limit of 15 panfish, with no more than five of any one species. There is a Town-owned ramp off West Squaw Lake Road. **Thompson Lake** – 382 acres. Electrofishing surveys the last two years show a huge 2014 black crappie yearclass. They were about 5 inches in length last spring and should grow about 2 inches per year.

Maple Lake – 144 acres. Abundant bluegill, but few fish over 6.5 inches. Maple Lake is located in City of Three Lakes and has a gravel ramp, fishing pier, beach and public shoreline along Lake Drive. **Pickerel Lake** – 736 acres. Abundant bluegill and pumpkinseed up to 7.5 inches, with lower numbers of larger



Fisheries biologist Luke Roffler with two handfuls of big Geneva yellow perch from a 2015 survey.

fish. **Sevenmile Lake** (Oneida and Forest Counties) – 503 acres. A single round of electrofishing found abundant bluegill from 6 to 7.5 inches.

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Lime Lake - 45 acres. Lime Lake was surveyed during the spring of 2015 by electrofishing to assess the bluegill population. The lake continues to produce bluegills over 8 inches in past surveys and the percentage of fish greater than 6 inches has remained steady since 2007, averaging around 40-45%. An experimental regulation was implemented 2016 to try to increase the number of fish over 8 inches. No length limit, no season, 25 panfish in total may be kept, but only 10 of one species. Public boat launch off of Lime Lake Rd on the north side of the lake.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

White Clay Lake - 234 acres. Recent surveys conducted on White Clay Lake indicate moderate populations of panfish. Electrofishing surveys indicated moderate bluegill abundance with 52% of catch over 6.0 inches and 16% over 7.0 inches. Black crappie, were found at moderate to low abundance with 21% of catch over 10.0 inches. Yellow perch, and pumpkinseed were also found in moderate abundance. 25 panfish may be kept daily, but only 10 of any one species may be possessed. One public access located on the east shore. White Clay Lake has minimal development of the shoreline and provides opportunities for observing many different birds and wildlife.

■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Delavan Lake - 1,906 acres. Black crappie averaging 10" (max of 11.5") and bluegill averaging 7.1" (max 9") – 2012 survey. No minimum length limit, 25 daily bag. A public boat launch on the east side of the lake at State Highway 50 and S Shore Drive (very large parking lot, but spots fill up quickly on the weekend), another public boat launch on the southwest side of the lake at Bluegill Road (smaller parking lot about 800' away from the launch), and a canoe access on the northwest side of the lake at N Shore Drive. Shorefishing is available at the 16 acre Town of Delavan park at the State Highway 50 boat launch.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Okauchee Lake - 1,157 acres. Black crappie average length – 9 inches. No minimum length, daily bag limit of 25. There are two public launches on Okauchee Lake found at the Golden Mast Restaurant and the DNR launch. The DNR boat launch is located just east of the Okauchee Lake dam on Road T, north of Wisconsin Avenue. The Golden Mast boat launch is located off of Lacys Lane north of East Wisconsin Avenue.

Oconomowoc Lake - 818 surface acres. Bluegill average length – 6 inches. No minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25. Access information: The public boat launch is located upstream of Oconomowoc Lake on the Oconomowoc River, downstream of Upper Oconomowoc Lake on the north side of Wisconsin Avenue. Excellent habitat and water quality has resulted in a healthy gamefish population and excellent panfish growth rates.

CATFISH



■ ADAMS, JUNEAU and WOOD COUNTIES

Petenwell Lake - 23,173 acres. Channel catfish were one of the more numerous fish species caught during the fall 2015 and spring 2016 Petenwell fish surveys. The advice from the Department for eating channel catfish caught between Nekoosa Dam to the Petenwell Dam is 1 meal per month of channel catfish less than 20". The Department's advice is to not eat channel catfish larger than 20" due to pollutants (Dioxin, PCBs, or Mercury). There are plenty of channel catfish in Petenwell Lake less than 20" available for harvest! Flathead catfish provide anglers with a unique fishing experience on Petenwell Lake. During our survey in 2016, we caught 47 flathead catfish ranging in length from 7.3" to 41.6" with an average length of 23". Three fish were caught 40"-41.6" with weights ranging from 30-40 pounds. Catfish (channel and flathead) daily bag limit of 10 in total. Petenwell Lake has ample access opportunities. Shoreline fishing opportunities exist in Nekoosa along CTH AA, at county parks, and on designated Wisconsin River Power Company lands. The Jim Freeman Memorial Park boat launch is located in Nekoosa on CTH AA. Boat launches are also available at the Adams County and Juneau County Parks. The Lure Bar and Grill has a private boat launch open to the public with a nominal fee and is a destination location for ice fishing access. Monroe Park in Adams County has a boat launch. A detailed map of



Fisheries biologist, Jennifer Bergman, with a nice flathead catfish on Petenwell Lake, Adams, Juneau and Wood Counties. Photo: Jake Thompson

all public access on the Wisconsin River Power Company's lands can be found on their website. http://www.wisconsinriverpower.com/pdf/recreation_petenwell.pdf Channel catfish will eat a variety of food types including plant matter, detritus, invertebrates, although adults are primarily piscivorous (they eat fish) and are opportunistic feeders. During the 2016 survey in a net we had a 22" channel catfish with the caudal fin of a 10-12" northern pike sticking out of its mouth. That channel catfish took on more than it could chew or swallow.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Lake Wissota - 6,148 acres. The catfish fishery flies under the radar on Lake Wissota, but it has been gaining popularity among local anglers. During a 2016 spring fisheries survey, flathead catfish over 25 lbs were a frequent occurrence with flatheads over 40 pounds not uncommon. Flatheads tend to prefer live bait, so bluegills or a sucker minnows are common offerings by anglers. The channel catfish population appears to be thriving as well with numerous fish encountered in the 10 to 12-pound range. Anglers have the best luck catching channel catfish with baits that have a pungent aroma such as stink bait or chicken liver. As far as places to target catfish, both channel and flathead catfish prefer to inhabit areas with current, so any of the tributaries feeding Lake Wissota, including the Chippewa River, are high percentage areas for pursuing catfish. Many of these rivers can be effectively fished from shore making for great bank fishing opportunities on this underutilized trophy fishery. Current regulations: No minimum length limit. The daily bag limit is 10. Year round season. Access information: 7 boat landings

■ JEFFERSON and DODGE COUNTIES

Lake Koshkonong/Rock River/Crawfish River/Bark River - 10,000 lake acres + 80+ river miles (Rock River), 48+ river miles (Crawfish River), 29 river miles (Bark River). 2016 catfish hoop netting on the Crawfish River produced channel catfish ranging from 11.5-28.5" and up to 9.2 pounds. Flathead catfish ranged from 17.2-41.0" and up to 36 pounds. Seasons are open year-round on the Rock/Crawfish/Bark Rivers and Lake Koshkonong for all gamefish except muskellunge. Catfish (channel, flathead) open all year with a 10 fish daily bag and no minimum length limit. Access information: Royce Dalman County Park, Groeller Road, Klement Park, City of Jefferson below Jefferson Dam, Rock River Park in Johnson Creek, Kaul Park in Ixonia. Opportunities for large flathead catfish (42+") exist in all major rivers in Jefferson and Dodge Counties.

■ KENOSHA and RACINE COUNTIES

Fox River - 25 miles from the Rochester Dam down to the Wisconsin-Illinois state line. Recent catfish surveys on the Fox River produced very high catch rates of 20"+ channel catfish and flathead catfish, including fish up to 37" and 24 pounds. Multiple boat launches and several shorefishing areas provide very good public access Current regulation: no length limit, 10 total catfish, open year round Access information: One public boat launch at County Highway F near Silver Lake and a public canoe/kayak launch at County Highway C near Wilmot. Excellent shorefishing access at various parks and public areas along the river. Contact local municipalities for more information.

■ LAFAYETTE COUNTY

East Branch Pecatonica River - 19.5 miles The East Branch of the Pecatonica River supports a fishable population of channel catfish upstream of Argyle Wisconsin. Hoop net surveys during August of 2016 sampled 133 channel



Fisheries technician Matt Andre displays a 40.5 pound flathead catfish caught in a Lake Wissota fisheries survey. Photo: J Gerbyshak

catfish from 9.3 to 29.5 inches with an average size of 20.8 inches. Eighty-one percent of the sample was 16 inches or greater. Twenty-nine percent of the sample was 24 inches or greater. No length limit with a daily bag limit of 10. Public boat launch and accessible bank fishing opportunities are located in Argyle. Disabled angler fishing access is also available. Most of the river from Blanchardville down to Argyle is navigable by boat. Seasonal log jams determine the number of stream miles open for boating. A channel catfish collected in our 2002 survey was recaptured in 2016. Estimated to now be 23 years old, fish #22291 was still living in the same stretch of river. The East Branch of the Pecatonica River is a tributary of the Pecatonica River. It is flows approximately 40 miles thru Iowa and Lafayette Counties. The headwater supports a class 2 brown trout fishery while the middle and lower stretches support coolwater walleye fisheries and warmwater catfish fisheries. Camping is available at Blackhawk Memorial County Park near the village of Woodford.



Channel catfish #22291 was tagged in 2002 on the East Br. of the Pecatonica River. Recaptured in 2016 by WDNR survey crews, #22291 is estimated to be 23 years old and still resides in the same stretch of river. Photo: Bradd Sims

■ **LAFAYETTE and GREEN COUNTIES**

Pecatonica River - 58 miles. The Pecatonica River supports a fishable population of channel catfish and flathead catfish. Hoop net surveys during August of 2016 sampled 992 yearling, and adult channel catfish from 6.2 to 27.4 inches with an average size of 15.5 inches. Fifty-four percent of the sample was 16 inches or greater. Twelve percent of the sample was 20 inches or greater. The same surveys sampled 48 flathead catfish from 8.2 to 43.7 inches with an average size of 16.5 inches. Six percent of the sample was 30 inches or greater. There is a strong year class of flathead catfish from 2012. These fish should recruit into the hook and line fishery in two to three years. There is no length limit with a daily bag limit of 10. Public boat launch and accessible bank fishing opportunities are located at State Highway 11, near Gratiot, and Darlington. Walk in anglers may also have access to the river via road crossings or permission from private landowners. Most of the river in Lafayette and Green Counties is navigable by boat. Seasonal log jams determine the number of stream miles open for boating. The Pecatonica River is a tributary of the Rock River. It is approximately 195 miles flowing from southern Wisconsin into northern Illinois. The word Pecatonica is believed to be Algonquian meaning “slow water”.

■ **MARQUETTE, GREEN LAKE and WAUSHARA COUNTIES**

Fox River - Channel catfish numbers remain high. The river is full of habitat that is ideal for this species. Annual recruitment is stable and it is not uncommon to see several hundred fingerlings in our annual fall shocker surveys. Fish in the 2 to 5 lb. range are common. Flathead populations remain stable. Since the implementation of more restrictive regulations in 2009, the number of fish over 36” continues to increase. 46.4% of the fish in our annual adult hoopnet survey in 2015 were within the harvest slot size of 30-36”. Length and bag limits for each of these species fall under the Winnebago System Waters regulation; Channel catfish – open all year, bag of 25, but only 24 if one Flathead is possessed, with no minimum length limit. Flathead – open first Saturday in May until September 30, daily bag of one, 30” minimum but fish from 36-42” may not be kept. Plenty of developed access areas are located along the river from Montello to Berlin including many areas around Princeton.

■ **SHAWANO, OUTAGAMIE and WAUPACA COUNTIES**

Wolf River - Recent hoop net surveys conducted on the Wolf River indicate moderate to high numbers of channel catfish with over 59% of fish over 20.0 inches and the largest fish at 34.0 inches.

Flathead catfish were found in lower numbers but exhibited good size with 65% of catch over 30.0 inches and the largest at 40.8 inches. Channel catfish: 25 in total, open all year Flathead catfish: Daily bag limit of one fish and only flatheads from 30 to 36 inches or over 42 inches may be possessed. Season follows statewide gamefish season. Multiple public and private boat accesses are located throughout the Wolf River from Fremont upstream to Shawano.



Fisheries technician, Elliot Hoffman, and Carl Hoffman, citizen volunteer, holding a large flathead catfish sampled in the Wolf River during a hoop net survey.

Good shore fishing areas are found at public accesses in Fremont, Gills Landing, New London, and at multiple properties in the Lower Wolf River bottoms state lands. Catfish are known to be nocturnal feeders and anglers tend to have better angling success by targeting these fish during early evening and night-time hours. Channel catfish are fairly opportunistic feeders and will eat a wide variety of food items including nightcrawlers, cut-bait, and smaller live bait while flathead catfish almost exclusively target larger live fish presentations. Catfish populations in the Wolf River exhibit high seasonal movement during spring warm-up with fish traveling many miles from wintering sites in the lower river and Upriver lakes to over-summer habitat throughout the upper river. Recent radio telemetry studies in the Wolf River indicate most flathead catfish prefer habitat associated with large wood structure.

LAKE STURGEON



■ **BAYFIELD and ASHLAND COUNTIES**

Chequamegon Bay - Abundance of sturgeon in Chequamegon Bay has increased since the 1990’s and angler success has appeared to increase in the last few years. Assessment data shows that fish over 60 inches are routinely found in the bay. The average length of sturgeon harvested has been around 56 inches. Natural recruitment is occurring and young sturgeon are caught in the Summer Index Assessment. Current regulation: Open all year, 50 inch minimum only one per year may be harvested. Anglers need to purchase a harvest tag if they intend to keep a sturgeon. The harvest tag is available throughout the season and costs \$20 for residents and \$50 for nonresidents. (Note: You do not need a harvest tag to catch and release sturgeon on waters open to sturgeon fishing during the open hook and line season). A remnant population on the Bad River which survived over-exploitation has gradually increased over the last several decades through natural

reproduction. Over twenty-five years of mark and recapture data have revealed that many of the lake sturgeon captured in Chequamegon Bay spawn in the White and Bad Rivers.

■ **CHIPPEWA, DUNN and EAU CLAIRE COUNTIES**

The Lower Chippewa River (Lake Holcombe downstream to the Mississippi River) offers anglers an opportunity to harvest a lake sturgeon greater than 60 inches during the hook-and-line season. If an angler intends to harvest a fish, they must first purchase a harvest tag and, if successful, register their catch. Eight lake sturgeon were harvested in the 2016 season, which is slightly below the average. The greatest harvest was from below the Dells Pond Dam and Dells Pond. Anglers also reported catching numerous sublegal fish, a sign of a healthy sturgeon population. Night crawlers or cut bait presented in deep holes of the river is a good combination for a successful sturgeon fishing trip.

■ **DOUGLAS COUNTY**

St. Louis River and Estuary - 12,000 acres Spring 2016 adult index survey captured and released over 200 lake sturgeon. To-



Chad Leanna, fishery technician wrangles with a 72-inch sturgeon from a netting survey on the East Fork Chippewa River, Sawyer County. Photo: Evan Sniadajewski.

tal lengths ranged from 39 to 51 inches, and most fish were males. One fish measured 65 inches and weighed nearly 54 pounds. Current regulation: Open June 16 through April 14; No harvest; Catch-and-release only. Arrowhead Landing and Fishing Pier: Located in the City of Superior where Belknap Street joins the river. The landing features paved parking, an ADA accessible picnic area, and portable restrooms. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> for complete information. Oliver Landing: Located in the Village of Oliver, just south of Superior, at end of East Detroit Street. The landing has paved parking and portable restrooms. Lake sturgeon were nearly extirpated from western Lake Superior during the late 1800s or early 1900s due to overharvest and habitat and water quality degradation. As water quality improved following passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972, Wisconsin DNR and Minnesota DNR worked to re-establish the population by stocking 762,000 fry, 143,000 fingerlings, and 500 yearlings into the St. Louis River between 1983 and 2000. Recent tagging studies found frequent migration along Lake Superior’s south shore, in one case over 150 miles east to Upper Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula. In 2016, a targeted fishing season for lake sturgeon

opened on the St. Louis River for the first time in many years.

■ **PRICE, RUSK and SAWYER COUNTIES**

Chippewa and Flambeau rivers – Anglers continue to enjoy both catch-and-release and harvest success in the mainstem and tributary streams open to hook-and-line sturgeon fishing each September. The tailwaters below the many dams on the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers are popular shorefishing spots where sturgeon anglers fish in daylight and after dark. The deeper pools and the impoundments fed by long, free-flowing segments upstream have yielded consistent fishing action and legal-size fish in both rivers. In September 2016, anglers registered eight sturgeon that measured at least 60 inches, matching 2013 as the second highest annual harvest in the Upper Chippewa Basin since more restrictive regulations took effect statewide in 2007. They took six sturgeon from the Flambeau River, one from Holcombe Flowage on the Chippewa River, and one from the East Fork Chippewa River. The heaviest sturgeon weighed 83 pounds, and the longest sturgeon measured 74 inches. The next hook-and-line sturgeon season is open September 2–30, 2017 on these and other selected inland waters. All adult and youth anglers who want to harvest a

INLAND TROUT



■ **ASHLAND COUNTY**

Trout Brook - There are 6.2 miles of trout water on Trout Brook. 2016 stream assessments surveyed brook trout at a rate of 290/mile, and individuals ranged in length from 3” – 14”. Although severe storms caused record flood conditions

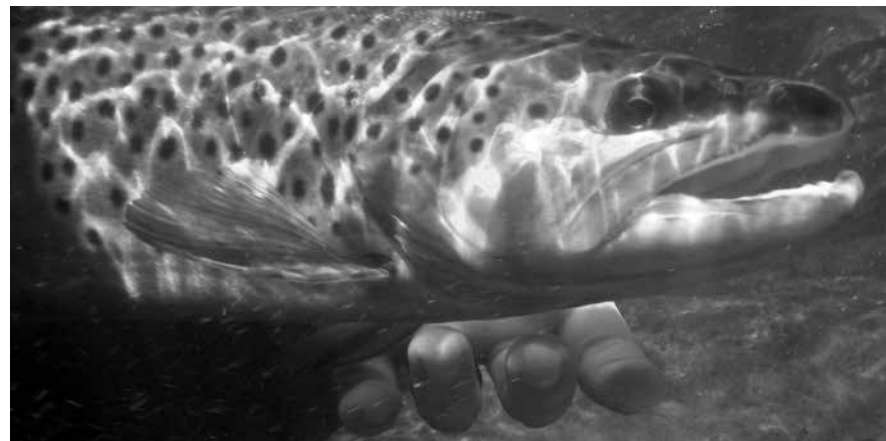
in the area, recent survey work on area streams such as Trout Brook show that these trout fisheries remain intact and continue to provide quality opportunities. There is access to Trout Brook at Highway 13, Highway C, and Silver Brook Road.

■ BARRON COUNTY

Hay River - There is a 26-mile stretch of the Hay River in Barron County that is classified as trout water, from 7th St. to CTH F. The uppermost reach of the Hay River near 19th Ave has cold water and fairly high abundance of brook trout. Electrofishing catch rates of brook trout are often ~1000 fish/mile with low size structure. As the Hay River flows southward, it resembles a warmwater stream with cold water inputs. At 10 ½ Ave, the catch rate of brook trout is typically between 100-200 trout/mile during electrofishing surveys. With the moderate density of trout in the lower reaches, the size structure improves and the population is comprised of 6 to 12 inch brook trout. Current regulation: The Hay River trout regulation is a no minimum length limit and a five fish daily bag limit. Anglers can access the stream from all of the road crossings. Unlike many area streams, the Hay River is fairly open and fishable throughout the year. The Hay River originates from the outlet of Beaver Dam Lake in northern Barron County and flows southward to Tainter Lake in Dunn County.

■ BAYFIELD and DOUGLAS COUNTIES

Perch, Wanoka, Beaver, Little Star, Overby, Nymphia Lakes and Bearsdale, Shunenberg and Johnson Springs in Bayfield Counties and **Anderson Lake** in Douglas County. All lakes under 100 acres with



most under 40 acres. These lakes are managed for put and take brook trout fishing. They are stocked annually prior to opening day and afford good angling action. Green, or 5 trout of any length All except for Perch Lake are walk or carry in access. See trout regulations for locations. Some years in November brood stock brook trout from the federal fish hatchery in Iron River, WI are stocked into Perch, Wanoka and Anderson Lake. This provides anglers a chance to ice fish for 18 inch brook trout.

■ BUFFALO, JACKSON and TREMPLEAU COUNTIES

Area trout streams - Approximately 50% of surveyed streams showed slight increases or decreases in brook trout reproduction and brown trout reproduction was stable to increasing. Adults: Approximately 50% of surveyed streams showed a slight increase or decrease in catch rate of adult brook trout. Brown trout catch rate remained stable. Legal: Although most area streams converted to a no-length limit regulation in 2016, based on comparisons to pre-2016

legal size regulations per individual stream, there was an overall increase in catch rate of brook trout and stable catch rate of brown trout at or above these past legal sizes. Area trout populations rebounded in 2015 coming out of drought conditions in 2012 and 2013 which had adversely affected trout populations in 2014. Although there were some decreases in brook trout reproduction and adult densities documented in 2016, these decreases were slight and catch rates were higher than those found in 2014. Surveys in 2016 found some systems such as the Elk (Trempealeau County), North and South Fork Buffalo River, North, South, and main Branch Trempealeau River, Pigeon Creek (above Pigeon Falls Pond), Pine Creek, and Tank Creek showing brook trout population increases and increasing or stable brown trout populations as compared to last year. Supplemental trout stocking from DNR and Co-operative hatcheries continues to help bolster trout populations throughout the area. Habitat restoration projects in 2016 improved stream conditions and angler access in the North and South Branches of Beaver Creek and Borst Valley Creek (Trempealeau County), and Swinns Valley Creek (Buffalo County). Many thanks to our partners in the Co-operative Trout Rearing program and Habitat Restoration program for providing more stocked fish, fishing access, and better habitat for our area streams! Please see the Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations for applicable length and bag limit restrictions for the streams you fish.

■ CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Duncan Creek - 15.5 miles of classified trout water. Duncan Creek meanders through Chippewa County before it empties into the Chippewa River near Chippewa Falls. Duncan Creek is popular among anglers because of the



quality trout fishery and ease of public access. Anglers can access the creek at one of the numerous state easements or state fishery areas. Trout populations in Duncan Creek remain healthy as corroborated by 2016 electrofishing surveys. Upstream of Lake Como the fishery consists of strictly brook trout with densities fairly high, around 3,000 fish per mile. Further downstream, near 130th Ave., the fishery changes to a mix of brook trout and brown trout. Densities are lower in this reach and average about 900 fish per mile, but the opportunity exists for trophy caliber fish. Regulations - Upstream of Bloomer Dam - no minimum length limit - bag limit of 5. Downstream of Bloomer Dam to Cty Hwy B - brown trout and rainbow trout 12" minimum length limit, brook trout 8" minimum length limit - bag limit of 3.

■ GREEN LAKE COUNTY

Big Green Lake - 7,346 acres. Big Green Lake contains a healthy, stocked lake trout fishery. These fish are slow growing, but long lived. Fish from a recent

2016 fall survey ranged from 11.8 to 36.7" in length with an averaged 23.2". 79.4% of fish sampled were greater than the length limit (17") and 74.2% were of quality size (20") or better. Lake trout season opens the first Saturday in January and runs through September 30th. Daily bag limit is 2 and the minimum length limit is 17". Sufficient developed landings are located around the lake and in the City of Green Lake. Some of these landings do require a fee.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

East Branch Eau Claire River downstream from STH 45; High density and high size quality brook trout population!; There are brook trout here in need of harvest especially in the special regs stretch from Bluebell Road downstream to River Road where the regulations are 5 daily, no harvest from 10-16", and 1 fish over 16" allowed; Higher harvest of small to mid-size trout may actually improve the numbers of quality size fish greater than 10"; About 1 in 5 (18%) of the adult population in the special regs reach are 8" and 9" fish and available to harvest. Brown Trout - **Evergreen River, South Branch Oconto River, and Wolf River. Stocked Lakes** - Crooked (brooks), Jack (rainbows), Pence (browns), Rogers (browns), and Townline (rainbows); 5 daily and no length limit

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

Area trout streams. Brook trout - Big Pine Creek, Prairie River, and New Wood River
Brown trout - Prairie River and North Branch Prairie River
Stocked Lakes - Ament (brooks), Henson (brooks), Larson (rainbows), Moraine (rainbows), and Tahoe (rainbows); 5 daily and no length limit; Ament and Tahoe lakes are both now open EVERY YEAR!

■ MARATHON COUNTY

Plover River - Fall survey work on Plover River for 2014 captured brown trout at a rate of 852 fish/mile; the most observed since the 2012 survey. 20% of the brown trout were larger than 12 inches. Brook trout numbers were captured at a rate of 335 fish/mile, the most since 2012 as well. 28% were larger than 8 inches. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; minimum length is 12 inches for brown trout and 8 inches for brook trout; the bag limit is 3 fish in total. Access: Plover River is accessible from the parking areas at Hwy N and Hwy Z, there are also other parking areas on the Plover River Fishery Area that offer walk-in access and numerous road crossings as well. Areas surveyed were upstream of County Hwy Z.

■ MARINETTE COUNTY

Thunder Lake - 135 acres. **South Branch Pemebonwon and North Branch Pemebonwon.** Thunder Lake is an opening day hot spot for trout anglers. Annually, between 3,000 and 4,000 rainbow trout are stocked before opening weekend (first Saturday in May). For anglers wanting to target brook trout, the South Branch Pemebonwon and North Branch Pemebonwon both have good brook trout populations. Over 6,500 brook trout are stocked each year in both the North & South Branches of the Pemebonwon (13,000 total). Current Regulation: 3 fish / angler / day: 8 inch minimum length limit These streams can be accessed from various road/stream crossings.

■ MARINETTE, OCONTO and DOOR COUNTIES

Green Bay and its tributaries - Brown trout stocked into the productive waters of Green Bay grow quickly. Most of the brown trout harvested by anglers are 2 or 3 years old. By autumn, a 2-year old brown would be around 23 inches, while a 3-year old brown would be around 29 inches. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily limit is 5 trout/salmon in total. Minimum length is 10 inches. Access information: Anglers can troll for browns in the spring and summer months. There are numerous boat access locations along the shores of Green Bay. Check out this website for details. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> Brown trout make fall migratory runs into the Menominee, Peshtigo, and Oconto Rivers. From late September into the winter months, shore anglers may have luck catching browns in these major tributaries. Here is the website to find detailed tributary access information. <http://>



Fisheries technician Ronald Rhode holds a 26.4-inch brown trout collected during a survey on the lower Menominee River in fall 2016.

dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/TributaryAccess.html. In recent years, anglers have had great success trolling stick baits or small spoons in shallow, nearshore waters in the early season right after ice-out, as well as throughout summer. Anglers can catch browns from shore in the fall as fish make their way up the tributaries to Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Late March to early May provides anglers a variety of options including fishing early season brown trout or the spring walleye runs on the large tributaries to Green Bay.

■ ONEIDA COUNTY

Brown trout are stocked in **Dorothy Lake** and **Bearskin River**; Rainbows are planned for **Perch Lake, Hawk Lake** and **Little Bass Lake**, and brook trout for **Mercer Springs**.

Trout Creek & Woodboro Springs - 2.4 miles of classified trout water, with 2 small spring ponds at the headwaters. A stream survey found abundant small brook trout up to 8.9 inches in length. Mostly bordered by Oneida County Forest lands, except the stream flows through 3 private forties directly upstream from Trout Creek Road. Directions: From Rhinelander, west on Hwy K 7 miles; south on Washburn Lake Road. West on Trout Creek Road 3 miles to stream crossing. Walk-in access of about ½ mile is also possible from the south off the end of Luber Lane. To reach Woodboro Springs, from Washburn Lake Road, head west on Woodboro Springs Road; Woodboro Spring ponds are a short walk down the second gated snowmobile/hiking trail to the right.





Fisheries technician, Kendal Patrie, with a 10-pound lake trout stocked into Patterson Lake on November 1, 2016. Photo: Skip Sommerfeldt.

■ PORTAGE COUNTY

Emmons Creek - Fall electrofishing work on Emmons Creek for 2016 captured brown trout at a rate of 1000 fish/mile which is down slightly from the long term average of about 1500 fish/mile. 37% were larger than 7 inches which is harvestable size and is an increase from the previous two years. Current regulation: Regular inland trout season; no minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 5 fish. Access: Emmons Creek is accessible from Stratton Lake Road parking areas, walk-in access on the Ice Age Trail, and other road crossings in Portage as well as Waupaca County. Areas surveyed were upstream of Stratton Lake Road and on DNR lands in Waupaca County.

■ PRICE COUNTY

Patterson Lake —70 acres. Anglers now have opportunity to catch four trout species in Patterson Lake, a popular trout fishing destination located about 15 miles east of Park Falls. Besides the catchable-size brook, brown, and rainbow trout stocked as yearlings (4,980 count) and surplus broodstock (650 count) from state and federal hatcheries, a new species was added in November 2016 when 362 lake trout were stocked from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery, including 115 adults that averaged 10 pounds each. Though these trout populations cannot sustain themselves, with a maximum depth of 34 feet Patterson Lake sometimes provides suitable temperature, dissolved oxygen, and food for stocked trout to survive and grow from year to year. That's the hope for the 17,200 rainbow trout that DNR stocked in 2016 as large fingerlings (4½ inches long) for the put-grow-and-take fishery. Anglers may keep a daily limit of 5 trout of any size, but only two may be lake trout. Those who need a fishing license must also have an inland trout stamp. Or, residents can purchase the two-day inland lake trout fishing license that allows them to fish only for lake trout in inland lakes without needing to buy a general fishing license and inland trout stamp. Boat and shorefishing access with modest improvements are available with no fee from Boat Landing Road off State Highway 182. A fishing pier may be added soon.

■ ST. CROIX, PIERCE and DUNN COUNTIES

Area trout streams - This area has approximately 600 miles of classified trout stream. Many large, popular brown trout streams can be found in Pierce County and the southern por-

tion of St. Croix County. Numerous small brook trout streams can be found in Dunn County. DNR crews monitor approximately 26 streams and 42 sites annually. Electrofishing surveys during 2016 show brown trout populations surging from the strongest trout hatch on record in 2015. During the 2017 season anglers will experience this extremely abundant year class of brown trout transition from the 7-10 inch range to the 10-13 inch range over the course of the 2017 season. Overall, trout densities may be the best we've seen in many years. Regulations may vary, be sure to check the Guide to Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations 2017-2018 for regulations on these streams. Most streams can be legally accessed off public road bridge right-of-ways. Anglers must keep their feet wet or ask permission from landowners. For additional public access go to dnr.wi.gov and search "Atlas" Recommended brown trout waters include: Kinnickinnic River, Rush River, Trimble River and Pine Creek. Check out the new habitat work on the Trimble River upstream from STH 65 or give the underutilized areas of the Lower Rush River a try downstream from STH 10 and the Kinnickinnic River upstream from CTH J.

■ SAWYER COUNTY

The Namekagon River in northern Sawyer County and southern Bayfield County is a top spot in northern Wisconsin for quality brown trout fishing. The naturally reproducing brown trout population in the Namekagon took a hit during the extreme winters of 2013 and 2014 but has bounced back nicely since. Surveys in the summer of 2016 found



A brown trout duo from a recent survey on the Namekagon River.

that trout around 14 inches were common. Those fish are expected to be 15-17 inches in 2017 and will be lots of fun for anglers that can outwit these wily wild trout. The Namekagon routinely produces browns over 20 inches, as well. With several other strong year classes coming up through the ranks, trout fishing on the Namekagon looks to be back in full swing. There are numerous access points for wading or canoe/drift boat fishing on the Namekagon, particularly along State Highway 63.

■ SHAWANO COUNTY

Mill Creek - Electrofishing surveys conducted in 2016 indicated brook trout density for adult-size fish has remained at high levels with catch rates ranking >90th percentile (when compared to statewide data) for 5 and 8 plus-inch trout. Current regulation: Category Red - Brown and rainbow trout 12-inch minimum length limit; Brook trout 8-inch minimum length limit; daily bag limit of 3 Fishing access is primarily limited to road crossings.

■ SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Mullet River - 5.9 miles of Class II brown trout waters. 2016 surveys yielded an average length of 8.3 inches, with a maximum length of 13.4 inches. A survey at one popular access site had a catch

rate which ranks it around the 51th percentile when compared with other all other Class II brown trout waters statewide. Current regulation: Daily bag limit 3, minimum length limit 8 inches, no gear restrictions. The best access is from the bridges at HWY 67 or CTH J near Woodside Ln, north of Plymouth. There is also access via Kettle Moraine State Forest - Northern Unit property near Glenbeulah. Recent removal of a dam in the Class II section of the Mullet River should greatly improve water quality and angling potential.

Onion River and its tributaries - 10 miles of Class I brown trout waters. 2016 surveys yielded an average length of 7.4 inches, with a maximum length of 19 inches. A survey at one popular access site had a catch rate of 1,016 fish per mile which ranks it around the 87th percentile when compared with other all other brown trout waters statewide. Current regulation: Upstream of CTH E - daily bag limit 2, minimum length limit 12 inches, artificial lures only. Downstream of CTH E - daily bag limit 3, minimum length limit 8 inches, no gear restrictions. The best access is from the bridge at CTH E and a number of points along CTH U just southwest of Plymouth. Upstream of CTH E anglers will find extensive habitat work in a number of stretches and this is generally where we find the larger fish in our surveys.

■ WALWORTH COUNTY

Bluff Creek - 1.75 miles. Annual trout monitoring on Bluff Creek results in very high catch rates of adult brown trout up to 19". Ongoing habitat restoration projects continue to provide high quality, fishable stream reaches upstream and downstream of County Highway P. Current regulation: 12" minimum length limit, 2 daily bag. Access information: Public access and parking is available off County Highway P south of the intersection with Reliance Road. Nearly all of Bluff Creek is contained within the Kettle Moraine State Forest, allowing users open access to the stream. Multiple stretches of habitat enhancement projects provide excellent fishing for those with the patience to get a lure or bait to drift into the overhanging structures.

■ WAUKESHA COUNTY

Rosenow Creek - this report references a 1/2 mile reach Average length - 7 inches. A recent stream shocking survey revealed brook trout up to 11 inches and captured at a rate of over 300 per mile. Current regulation: 8 inch minimum length, daily bag limit of 3 Access information: Access can be found at the Oconomowoc high school property off of North Lapham Street. This small coldwater stream has consistent natural reproduction of brook trout providing good action.

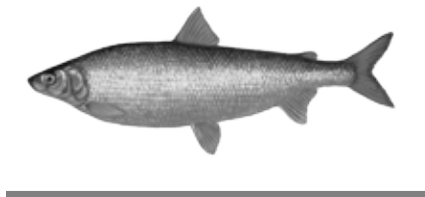


Aaron Oconnell, fisheries technician, holding a brown trout captured in a Waupaca County stream during an electrofishing survey.

■ WAUPACA COUNTY

Radley Creek - Electrofishing surveys conducted in 2016 indicated brown trout density for adult size fish was at high levels with catch rate ranking at the 90th percentile (when compared to statewide data) for 6+ inch trout and comparable to the 10 year average. Survey catch rates for legal size fish (8+ inches) are at moderate to high levels. Current Regulation: Category Yellow (8 inch minimum, 3 daily bag limit) Fishing access is very good with multiple DNR managed properties off State Highway 22, Stratton Lake Rd, and Dayton Rd. The Radley Creek has a long history of past habitat development projects that has significantly improved the quality of trout populations.

LAKE WHITEFISH



■ DOOR, KEWAUNEE and BROWN COUNTIES

Green Bay waters - Species population information: Lake whitefish continue to provide great action for ice anglers on Green Bay since their impressive entry into the fishery nearly 10 years ago; recent survey data suggest it will continue. Much of the action takes place at various locations along the east shore between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. Whitefish angler harvest rates for the past two ice fishing seasons were approximately the same at around 0.6 fish harvested per hour of effort and are above the 9-year average. Population index surveys suggest the whitefish spawning stock(s) in Green Bay will continue to produce some great fishing in the near future. This is due to some years of very good recruitment within the last decade reflected by very good catches of whitefish in our 2016 juvenile index survey and record high young-of-year production in 2015. Current regulation: The bag limit for lake whitefish is 10 fish with no length limit. Access information: There are a number of access points between Dyckesville and Sturgeon Bay. Anglers can refer to a map of the area for boat launch sites or go to: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess> for a listing of some of the launches in the area. Anglers are advised to check ahead locally for ice conditions before venturing out. During the November spawning periods of 2015 and 2016, approximately 2,800 lake whitefish were tagged in several west shore Green Bay rivers. Tag recovery data will provide several pieces of important information including whether whitefish exhibit river specific inter-annual spawning site fidelity.

■ DOUGLAS COUNTY

Lake Superior - Lake whitefish are abundant throughout Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior and have increased since the 1970's. Anglers have had success targeting lake whitefish, particularly through the ice in January through March. Lake whitefish had the highest harvest on record in 2015 and the average size harvested was 18.4 inches. Current regulation: Cisco and whitefish: Open all year, daily bag limit 10, no minimum length. Access information: <http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/DNRManagedLands/index.html?l=dRecLayer>. Lake whitefish is one of the most valuable commercial

species in the Great Lakes and make up the majority of commercial harvest in the Apostle Islands. Anglers are increasing the effort and success for this prized table fare.

GL SALMON & TROUT



DOUGLAS COUNTY

Lake Superior - Lake trout still make up the bulk of anglers catch in the in Lake Superior, yet abundance appears to have declined in recent years. This has led to a series of Emergency Rules for the Apostle Island Region (East of Bark Point). The Apostle Islands region supports populations of naturally reproducing lake trout, while the western end still needs stocking to maintain high catch rates; however, 80% of lake trout harvested in the Western Arm are naturally produced and not from hatchery operations. In 2015, catch of lake trout in the Western Arm were the highest since 1993. The average lake trout caught throughout the year is about 21 inches, but fish exceeding 40 inches are caught, demonstrating true trophy potential. In addition to lake trout, trolling in the Western Arm of Lake Superior produces coho salmon, brown trout, and walleye. Current regulation: Lake trout: The lake trout season is open from December 1 through September 30. West of Bark Point: 15 inch minimum length, bag limit of 3, but only 1 over 25 inches. Check regulations for Emergency Rules for lake trout in waters east of Bark Point. Trout (rainbow, brown, brook, splake) = 5 in total of which only 1 may be rainbow trout, 1 may be brook trout. Rainbow trout must be greater than 26 inches, brook trout must be greater than 20 inches, and all other trout must be greater than 15 inches. Salmon (coho, Chinook, pink, Atlantic) = 5 in total with no minimum length limit and no closed season Access information: <http://dnrm.wi.gov/DNRManagedLands/index.htm?l=dRecLayer>. Hatchery fish are still important in the Western Arm of Lake Superior. During the 2015 summer index a total of 223 Lake Trout were caught, and 38.1% were hatchery origin. However, naturally reproduced fish make up the majority of harvest but are mostly under 20 inches.



Chinook salmon held by DNR fisheries biologist Nick Legler on October 1 of 2016 at the Besadny Anadromous Fisheries Facility open house in Kewaunee.

Bois Brule River - 44 miles.

BROWN TROUT

A total of 3,930 lake-run brown trout were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2015. The brown trout count fluctuated between 3,000 and 4,000 for the last 12 years. 83% of all brown trout in Fall 2015 ranged from 18 to 24 inches, and the run peaked during mid-August. Nearly 14% of resident brown trout in a survey of the upper river were 12 to 20 inches. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March 25 through November 15; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only two may be brown trout over 15 inches. Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 6 to September 30. Access information: Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Brown trout is native to Europe and was initially imported over 100 years ago after native species (brook or "speckled" trout) declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Today, lake-run and stream-resident brown trout in the Bois Brule River sustain themselves by reproducing naturally in the tributaries; no hatchery fish are added, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. Since these "wild" stocks respond strongly to their environments, such as the temperatures of the river and lake and flow of the river, their migration numbers and timing can challenge anglers of all skill levels. Brown trout are most active during low daylight and at night. Coupled with the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest, the brown trout help create a truly unique fishing experience, if not an overall adventure unmatched by any other regional resource. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood was installed near Cutler Creek in 2016, which increased the aquatic habitat diversity and submerged woody cover in the area.

COHO

A total of 1,680 were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway in Fall 2015. The coho salmon count typically fluctuated between 1,000 and 2,000 over the last 10 years. 42% of coho salmon in Fall 2015 ranged from 19 to 22 inches, and the run peaked during mid to late-September. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March



A 20+ inch coho salmon from the lower Bois Brule River, Douglas County. Photo: Paul Piszczek.

25 through November 15; Minimum length: 12 inches; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total; Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 6 to September 30. Access information: Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Coho salmon are native to the Pacific Northwest United States, and they first established reproducing populations in the Bois Brule River in the 1970s from stocks introduced elsewhere in Lake Superior. Today, the stock is self-sustained by reproducing naturally in Lake Superior south shore tributaries, including the Bois Brule and its tributaries. Coho salmon migrate to the Bois Brule primarily in the fall and early winter, although some migrate earlier, during the late summer. Environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood was installed near Cutler Creek in 2016, which increased the aquatic habitat diversity and submerged woody cover in the area.

STEELHEAD

A total of 6,167 steelhead were counted passing the lamprey barrier/fishway from Fall 2015 through Spring 2016. 62% of the fish ranged from 20 to 25 inches and 25% exceeded 26 inches (minimum length limit). Annual run counts and timing vary relative to river and lake conditions, particularly during spring according to lake and river ice-out. Current regulation: Season is different for lower and upper river. Lower River: Downstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open March 25 through November 15; Minimum length: 26 inches; Daily bag: 5 trout and salmon in total, only one may be a rainbow trout. Upper River: Upstream from U.S. Highway 2; Season: Open May 6 to September 30. Access information: Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/StateForests/bruleRiver/> and click on the "Maps and Pubs" tab. All access points only at designated areas in the Brule River State Forest. Easy access at many points, especially U.S. Highway 2, Copper Range Campground, and State Highway 13. Steelhead is a non-native, naturalized species first imported from the western United States over 100 years ago after native species (brook or "speckled" trout) declined with timber harvest, fires, and other regional land use changes. Today, the stock is self-sustained (i.e., wild), meaning no hatchery fish are added to the system, a rarity for many of today's fisheries. As with many wild stocks, environmental factors such as river and lake water temperature and river flow can significantly influence the numbers of fish and the timing of river migration; this can challenge anglers of all skill levels. These wild fish, coupled with the densely wooded surroundings of the Brule River State Forest, help create a truly unique fishing experience, if not an overall adventure unmatched by any other regional resource. The 26-inch

minimum length limit exists because it is the length at which most steelhead have spawned at least once in their natural environment. Aquatic habitats have been modified over the years to increase spawning success and the area available for young fish to grow. Large wood was installed near Cutler Creek in 2016, which increased the aquatic habitat diversity and submerged woody cover in the area.

Lake Michigan and tributaries. Steelhead rainbow trout contribute to Lake Michigan's diverse fishery and provide opportunities for lake and stream anglers to catch big trout. Steelhead rainbow trout are stocked annually into more than 20 large and small streams flowing into Lake Michigan throughout the lakeshore. These stocked fish swim to Lake Michigan and later return to streams for spawning, thus steelhead provide seasonal fishing opportunities for boat, pier, shore, and stream anglers. Boat anglers commonly catch steelhead during the summer. Stream anglers commonly target steelhead during spawning runs which typically peek in April-May for Wisconsin's Lake Michigan tributaries but can begin as early as late summer and continue through



John Gozdziński, Secretary's Director of Northern Wisconsin, with a lake trout while helping the Bayfield DNR staff on a fisheries assessment. Photo: Randy Besonen.

winter depending on flow, temperature, and genetics. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/Tributary-Access.html>). Many future steelhead projects are ongoing or planned in Wisconsin including a new hatchery to produce steelhead and research to evaluate wild production and outmigration from tributary streams. Plans are also developing to begin lake-wide marking of stocked steelhead with coded wire tags, which will be a great opportunity to learn about the steelhead we stock and catch.

CHINOOK

Chinook or king salmon are among the largest of the Lake Michigan salmonids and provide great fishing opportunities supported by wild and stocked fish. Results from a lake-wide tagging proj-



ect by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and collaborators (including volunteer anglers!) show that Chinook salmon swim throughout Lake Michigan and anglers in Wisconsin commonly catch Chinooks stocked in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Many wild Chinook salmon are caught by Wisconsin anglers too, most of which likely originated from the State of Michigan and Canadian waters of Lake Huron. For 2016, general reports indicated a good season for Chinook salmon fishing in Wisconsin with many stocked and wild Chinooks caught and usual variations in catch due to factors including temperature, wind, and forage distributions. Current regulation: Open all year. Five fish daily bag limit (total trout and salmon). Ten inch minimum length limit. Access information: Many boat and shore access locations are available (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/>, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/Tributary-Access.html>). With a mix of wild and stocked Chinook salmon, among several other species, anglers can anticipate a continued strong and diverse fishery for Lake Michigan. It's also important to acknowledge that Lake Michigan is complex and continually changing. Managers and anglers alike have successfully adjusted to past changes on the big lake (i.e., by adjusting stocking levels, changing fishing techniques, targeting different species, etc.) and continued adaptations will help maintain a balanced and diverse fishery for anglers to enjoy.

■ **KENOSHA, RACINE, MILWAUKEE, OZAUKEE and SHEBOYGAN COUNTIES**

Lake Michigan and tributaries

BROWN TROUT
Brown trout fishing in 2016 remained consistent with previous years, and anglers had many days of great brown trout fishing. Fishing should remain productive in 2017 through late fall and into the winter months at most ports along the lake, with the Milwaukee harbor being the most popular and productive brown trout fisheries. With round gobies providing an abundant food source, browns show good growth rates and most reach the 15 to 20 pound range. In 2015 the brown trout harvest in Wisconsin was

head run was sporadic at best with river conditions fluctuating constantly due to an unseasonably warm winter/spring; many rain events caused tributaries to run high and fast through most of the spring. Steelhead stocking numbers will increase slightly in 2017. With the recent warmer winters look for steelhead fishing to start early and last through late April. Anglers should have success catching both strains of steelhead (Chambers Creek and Ganaraska), along with the nearshore strain of Arlee rainbow trout in 2017. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger.

RAINBOW TROUT

In 2015 rainbow trout fishing was below average, and 59,106 fish were harvested. In spring of 2016 the steel-



Many happy anglers enjoy the quality fishing to be had from Lake Michigan.

CHINOOK SALMON

Chinook salmon fishing was slightly below the long-term average in 2015, with 113,973 fish harvested. Stocking reductions that were made starting in 2013 to match the available prey, and lower natural reproduction likely impacted the Chinook fishery in 2016. Although harvest was lower, fishing in 2016 was fairly good for most of the summer months. Some of the largest Chinooks in recent years were caught in 2016, with many fish reaching well over the 20 pound mark and some pushing 25 pounds taken from several of the ports along the lake. The fall fishing in 2016 was better than past years as well; with prolonged mild weather and optimum river flows, salmon ran up most tributaries in healthy numbers and anglers took advantage of some great shore and stream fishing. We hope that trend continues; with solid numbers of fish being available and overall size increasing, the 2017 Chinook season is surely going to be one to get out and take advantage of. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger.

COHO SALMON

The coho fishing season typically starts in the warmer southern waters of Lake Michigan and then progresses northward all the way to Sheboygan waters. Coho fishing in 2016 was some of the best that anglers have seen in several years; the pier and shore fishing was especially productive from late May-July at just about every port along the lake. If weather patterns mimic that of 2016, anglers can look forward to another fantastic coho bite in 2017. About 400,000 + coho are stocked annually in Wisconsin waters, and this should hold true through 2017 as well. Current regulation: Open all year. Daily bag limit is 5 in total; 10 inches or larger.

LAKE TROUT

Approximately 700,000 - 800,000 lake trout are stocked in Lake Michigan annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Furthermore, evidence of natural reproduction has been documented through DNR surveys as well as in the sport fishery. The sport harvest has been over 25,000 fish since 2012. In 2015 35,715 fish were taken, which was the highest harvest of lake trout since 2002. Anglers from Sheboygan to Kenosha reported good catches of lake trout, and it seems anglers are targeting this fish more in recent years. Current regulation: Open from March 1 – October 31. Daily bag limit is 2; 10 inches or

larger. However, no possession of lake trout is allowed within the Mid-Lake Reef Complex (see fishing regulations booklet for more details).

LEAVE NO LINE BEHIND

When monofilament fishing line is disposed of improperly, it can cause serious problems for wildlife, people, boat propellers and the environment. The DNR is coordinating a pilot project to collect this fishing line and recycle it into new products such as tackle boxes and fish habitat structures.



PVC monofilament collection bin

Fishing line causes problems when left in the water or put in the trash.

The monofilament line is being collected at DNR Service Centers as well as in outdoor collection bins hosted by local organizations.

For more information:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/FishingLine.html>

THE NEXT BEST THING TO
FISHING
IS TALKING ABOUT
FISHING.
takemefishing.org

Wisconsin fish records have gone... GREEN!

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a fish, likely a bass, against a dark, textured background.

LIVE RELEASE Record Fish Category

visit dnr.wi.gov and search "record fish"

New in 2017!

A circular logo with the text "Live Release Records" and a small fish icon.



Getting Hooked on Wisconsin Fishing

Community/urban fishing program provides access to fishing fun!

URBAN FISHING

■ KENOSHA, MILWAUKEE, OUTAGAMIE, OZAUKEE, RACINE, ROCK, SHEBOYGAN, WALWORTH, WASHINGTON and WAUKESHA COUNTIES

Urban Fishing Waters Include the following: Kenosha County: Anderson Park, Bong Children's Pond, Milwaukee County: Brown Deer Park, Dineen Park, Estabrook Park, Franklin High School, Greenfield Park, Holler Park, Humboldt Park, Jackson Park, Juneau Park, Kosciuszko Park, McCarty Park, McGovern Park, Miller Park, Mitchell Park, Oak Creek Parkway, Saveland Park, Schoetz Park, Scout Lake, Sheridan Park, Washington Park, Wilson Park; Outagamie County: Appleton Memorial Pond; Ozaukee County: Harrington Beach Quarry, Mequon Rotary Park East and West, Pucketts Pond, Schowalter Park, Willow Brooke Park; Racine County: Gorney Park, Johnson Park, Lockwood Park, Pritchard Park, Quarry Lake, Reservoir Park; Rock County: Lions Park Pond Sheboygan County: Kohler-Andrae State Park Pond, Sheboygan Quarry, Memorial Park, River Park Lagoon ; Walworth County: Ceylon Lagoon, Congdon Park Millpond Park Pond; Washington County: Boot Lake, Hartford Millpond, Homestead Hollow Park, Kewaskum Millpond, Regner Pond Sandy Knoll Park, Wells Lake, Wiedenbach Park Pond; Waukesha County: Calhoun Park, Delafield Rearing Pond, Foxbrook Pond Heyer Park North and South, Lapham Peak Pond, Lepper Dam Millpond, Lions Park-Overland, Menomonee Park, Minooka Park, Muskego Park, Nixon Park, Regal Park, and Woodfield North and South. County: Waukesha Lake size: Urban fishing waters are small lakes and ponds under 25 acres. Species population information: Average Length – 8

inches. Current regulation: Designated urban waters have a year-round season, no length limits, and a special season (March 11 thru April 29, 2017) for juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers. They also have a daily bag limit of three (3) trout, one (1) gamefish (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, and northern pike), and ten (10) panfish (bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and bullhead) Access information: Shore fishing opportunities are found at all urban ponds.

■ LANGLADE COUNTY

Remington Pond – City of Antigo – 5 acres. Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish. Stocked with rainbow trout in the spring and brook trout in the fall. The Antigo Chapter of Trout Unlimited periodically stocks trout also for the kids to enjoy. Open year around – no length limit, 3 trout per day, 1 bass or northern pike per day, 10 panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, perch, bullhead) per day. New fishing dock to be constructed by Antigo Trout Unlimited and the City of Antigo in 2017!

■ LINCOLN COUNTY

Mirror Lake – City of Tomahawk – 4 acres. Only juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers may fish. Stocked with rainbow trout in the spring and brook trout in the fall. Open year around – no length limit, 3 trout per day, 1 bass or northern pike per day, 10 panfish (bluegill, sunfish, crappie, perch, bullhead) per day

■ SAWYER COUNTY

Thousands of people visit Hayward, Wisconsin each summer. Many are serious anglers, but some may be be-

ginners or just curious about fishing. **Shue's Pond** is in a small park located adjacent to downtown Hayward on 3rd and Kansas Street. There are picnic tables, a gazebo, and plenty of fishing access to the pond. Shue's Pond is connected to Smith Lake Creek and Lake Hayward and it's always full of panfish that are willing to bite. Shue's is a great location for kids or families that want to try fishing in an easily accessible spot with good odds of catching some fish. There are several bait shops within a few blocks of the pond. Kids under 16 can fish for free, anyone 16 and older needs a license to fish.

■ WASHINGTON COUNTY

Regner Park Pond - 2 acres The pond is stocked annually with rainbow trout from the state hatchery system. The City of West Bend also regularly stocks other species. Current regulation: Year-round season, no length limits, and a special season (1st Saturday in March up to the last Saturday in April) for juveniles 15 years of age and younger and certain disabled anglers. There is also a daily bag limit of three (3) trout, one (1) gamefish (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, sauger, and northern pike), and ten (10) panfish (bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and bullhead). Access information: (best access point(s), shorefishing opportunities, etc.) Regner Park, 800 N Main Street, West Bend, WI 53090 Regner Park Pond was recently dredged and fish habitat was added to improve the angling experience. Other park amenities include trails, sports facilities and play areas, plus a summer swimming pond and winter ice rink.



Close to Home series promotes shore fishing

Fifty places to fish from shore within 60 minutes of Milwaukee.

Fall may be the last thing on many anglers' minds this time of year, but when summer winds down, we don't want you to forget about the famous trout and salmon spawning run that takes place every year in and around Milwaukee's harbor mouths and rivers.

To make sure you get the most of your fishing experience, we've got information for anglers looking to fish the spectacular runs that highlight 50 places to fish from shore within 60 minutes of downtown Milwaukee.

And although it's not fall, you certainly don't need to wait for the leaves to change color to take advantage of these hotspots. They're great places to fish year-round.

Visit dnr.wi.gov/topic/Fishing/Documents/LakeMichigan/closetohome_letter.pdf

Coming soon: More in the CtH series

2017 Wisconsin Fishing Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
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Basic tackle box

